

# 60 Years of Chinese Misrule
## Arguing Cultural Genocide in Tibet

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

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A report by the International Campaign for Tibet
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The International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) report, "60 Years of Chinese Misrule/Arguing Cultural Genocide in Tibet" is drawn in part from a 2011 draft text, "Tibetocide," written by the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) of the Central Tibetan Administration. The final version of the report was produced by the ICT Washington, D.C. office with an outside writer, who brought a coherent sense of narrative to this ambitious project and skillfully wove together the many complex issues that it seeks to address. The ICT staff in Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, London, and in the field also provided essential editorial and substantive support throughout the process. In addition, this report was reviewed at various stages by international legal, policy and Tibet experts who provided invaluable guidance and suggestions that improved it immeasurably. Finally, many Tibetans—including ICT's own Tibetan staff—provided important information used in this report. ICT is especially grateful to our expert advisors and reviewers, and others for their contributions to this report. Thanks also to Bill Whitehead, whose discerning eye made possible a quick turnaround in design and publication.

Any errors or omissions in this report are solely the responsibility of its authors.

Cover photo: Tibetan Buddhist monk standing at the doors of his monastery in Barkham (Chinese: Ma'erkang), Tibetan area of Sichuan province. He is flanked by propaganda posters: on his right, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin; on his left, Hu Jintao surrounded by Tibetan women stands in front of the Potala Palace, Lhasa. Photo credit: Gilles Sabrie

Stamp image: The stamp image appearing throughout the report was used in a 2011 protest in Tibet. The Tibetan script inside the heart reads 'Tibet' and the script surrounding the heart reads 'Long live His Holiness the Dalai Lama.'

## FOREWORD

This report, "60 years of Chinese Misrule/Arguing Cultural Genocide in Tibet," is intended to provide a base-line understanding of Tibetan culture and the Chinese policies and practices that have deliberately sought to control and destroy it. As such, the report invites discussion on the circumstances that define cultural genocide in Tibet. The International Campaign for Tibet particularly welcomes a closer look at issues of evidence and intent by genocide scholars. By releasing this report in April 2012, during International Genocide Prevention Month, we hope it will contribute to international efforts to prevent and combat genocide in all its manifestations, and to the realization of a world where fundamental human rights and human dignity are upheld by all governments and effectively protected through international legal instruments.

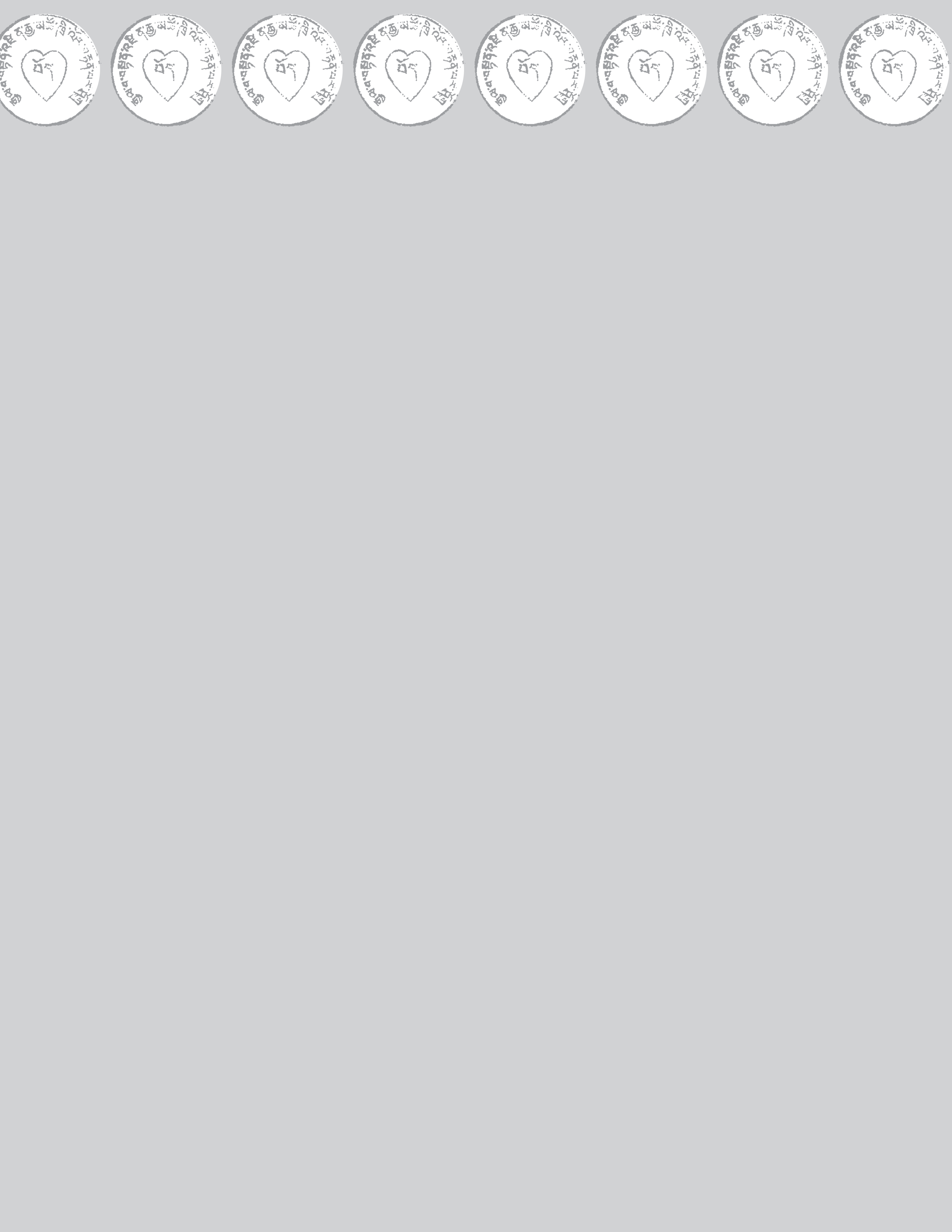
While we hope this report will make such a contribution, its specific purpose is to make a persuasive case that the situation in Tibet—the pattern of oppression throughout the 60 years of Chinese rule, up to the current crisis—requires the international community to respond in a qualitatively different manner than it has. We welcome a constructive examination of the concepts put forward in this report by international law and country studies experts, human rights advocates, policy makers, peoples whose cultural rights have been abused by the state and others who have a stake in understanding the kind of cultural and human rights violations that have characterized the situation in Tibet.

Mary Beth Markey
President, International Campaign for Tibet
April 2, 2012

## NOTE ON GEOGRAPHICAL TERMS

Tibet was traditionally comprised of three main areas: Amdo (northeastern Tibet), Kham (eastern Tibet) and U-Tsang (central and western Tibet). The Tibet Autonomous Region was set up by the Chinese government in 1965 and covers the area of Tibet west of the *Drichu* or Yangtze River, including part of Kham. The rest of Amdo and Kham have been incorporated into Chinese provinces, and where Tibetan communities were said to have 'compact inhabitancy' in these provinces they were designated Tibetan autonomous prefectures and counties. As a result most of Qinghai and parts of Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces are acknowledged by the Chinese government to be 'Tibetan.' ICT uses the term 'Tibet' to refer to all Tibetan areas currently under the jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China.

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# SUMMARY

This report is an examination by the International Campaign for Tibet of the impact on Tibetan culture of Chinese Communist Party rule in Tibet. Its publication comes at a time when the situation on the Tibetan plateau has reached a critical inflexion point. Having compiled this report, ICT makes the following findings:

- The Chinese authorities have engaged in a consistent effort over 60-plus years to replace authentic, organic Tibetan culture with a state-approved and controlled version that comports with the ideological, political and economic objectives of the Chinese Communist Party. This effort has been pursued through intentional policies that are designed to fundamentally alter Tibetan culture in a way that robs it of its essence and turns it into something that the Chinese authorities can manage.

- Chinese Communist rule in Tibet has exhibited a pattern of repression, relative liberalization, vigorous reassertion of cultural identity by Tibetans, and renewed repression. This pattern is rooted in the application of policies that privilege the Chinese party-state's interests over those of the Tibetan people. These policies are, in turn, based on a set of ideological and nationalistic principles that permeate the thinking of Chinese leaders and have taken hold on a societal level.

- Chinese policies and practices of cultural repression and destruction are so systematic and persistent in Tibet, and their effects are so serious, that they contain elements of cultural genocide.

- These elements of cultural genocide, combined with certain conditions such as: a history of acts of genocide against Tibetans as a religious group,[1] unprecedented communal tensions, and officially sanctioned statements that provoke prejudice and hatred directed at Tibetans, have been recognized as precursors to conventional genocide elsewhere, and should sensitize the international community to take robust action in the case of Tibet.

## Tibet, Cultural Genocide and the Genocide Continuum

Because the term 'cultural genocide' is not codified in international law, there has been some ambiguity about whether it is an appropriate label for the situation in Tibet and what, if anything, the application of this label means for the Tibetan people, the Chinese authorities, and the international community. This report addresses these ambiguities by:

- Developing a working definition for 'cultural genocide,' rooted in the conventional international legal discourse of genocide and international human rights law;

- Reviewing the history of Chinese Communist rule in Tibet with a focus on ideological and political policy drivers and the manner of implementation of these policies;

- Analyzing the historical and present situation in Tibet in relation to the aforementioned working definition of cultural genocide, and placing this analysis within the genocide continuum; and

- Articulating the bases for stronger international efforts to reverse the current trend of culturally destructive policies in Tibet.

By examining the historical record up to the present day, particularly the documented actions and attitudes of successive Chinese Communist leaders who have shaped and continue to shape Tibet policy, this report focuses on the core aspects of cultural destruction in Tibet and how they are deeply embedded in the political structure of the People's Republic of China. This report highlights the responsibilities of the Chinese government, not only as the perpetrator of human rights abuses against the Tibetan people but also in their self-selected role as the primary guarantor of Tibetans' cultural rights. The report demonstrates that the Chinese state has not only failed in its responsibility to protect the Tibetan people and their rights under Chinese and international law, it has been the

primary violator of those rights. This cultural repression has been most visible and most intensely felt by the Tibetans in the following core areas:

**Attacks on religion.** The Chinese government has focused on controlling, and undermining when they are unable to control, Tibetan Buddhism as practiced by the vast majority of Tibetans. They have accomplished this through: intense regulation of and control over religious institutions; policies that discourage average Tibetans from engaging in religious practice; patriotic education, propaganda and other political campaigns that are fundamentally opposed to basic tenets of Tibetan Buddhism; manipulation of factions within Tibetan Buddhism in order to exacerbate internal divisions; and overt repression, including rhetorical attacks on Tibetan religious leaders, and the public humiliation, detention, imprisonment, and torture, collective punishment and killing of religious leaders and adherents.

**Imposition of inappropriate economic development policies.** Chinese policies have targeted culturally distinct Tibetan pastoralists through forced sedentarization and other policies, including poorly developed and implemented environmental protection efforts. These policies and practices have not only deprived Tibetans of their livelihoods but also of an intimate connection to the land and environment that has existed for thousands of years. The Chinese party-state has applied economic development policies that are heavily reliant on extractive industry, infrastructure, and the migration into Tibet of a large number of non-Tibetans. These policies have deprived Tibetans of control over their own future and threaten to make them a cultural, if not demographic, minority in their own land.

**Attacks on Tibetan intellectual and non-religious cultural life.** The Chinese party-state's policies targeting the intellectual and non-religious cultural life of Tibetans include: denial of a range of linguistic rights, including the right to develop and use the Tibetan language as the language of commerce, education and administration in Tibetan areas; imposition of the Chinese language and a self-serving educational curriculum on Tibetan children, while simultaneously denying them opportunities for cultural development and expression; denial of publication and other cultural expression for Tibetan language writers whose work challenges or runs contrary to the party-state's defined narrative for Tibet; arrest and torture of Tibetan writers, artists and others who engage in cultural expression that challenges the party-state's defined narrative for Tibet; and the 'Disneyfication' of Tibetan culture in a fashion that commoditizes it, primarily for the benefit of non-Tibetans.

**Discrimination against Tibetans and delegitimization of Tibetan culture.** Tibetans have been subject to consistent discriminatory practices under Chinese rule on the basis of their ethnicity, religion and political beliefs. They have been targeted for both official punishment and societal ostracism based on expressions of those beliefs. The party-state has engaged in a continual policy and propaganda effort that characterizes Tibetan culture as backward and something to be remediated through a state-directed modernization process. Chinese policies and the manner of implementing these policies show a consistent disregard for Tibetans' human and cultural rights. These are not merely individual violations; rather, the Chinese state has clearly targeted Tibetans as a group.

The report finds compelling evidence that the particular, intentional policies and practices of the present Chinese government are rooted in and have served to exacerbate a highly unstable dynamic across the Tibetan plateau. The current dynamic, since at least March 2008, including the self-immolations and other forms of protest against Chinese rule in Tibet, is part of a broader context that should be viewed against the indicators that genocide scholars have identified as warning signs of pre-genocidal behavior elsewhere. These warning signs include:

**A history of acts of genocide.** Following attempts by the Tibetan government to secure international support against the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet, and in response to the widespread, systematic and targeted nature of the violence and physical destruction of the 1950s, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), a group of international legal scholars based in Geneva, produced two reports on evidence relating to the question of genocide in Tibet. Its 1960 report found that "acts of genocide had been committed in Tibet in an attempt to destroy the Tibetans as a religious group."[2]

**Severe and systemic state repression.** Since 2008, Lhasa and other areas have been placed under security situations tantamount to martial law. Tibetans across the plateau have experienced increased restriction of their rights to freedom of speech, assembly and religion, as well as large-scale roundups of civilians, such as those that have occurred in the Ngaba area since August 2011. Torture and ill treatment of Tibetan detainees is brutal and endemic, and has included deaths in custody. While some of these practices are present throughout China, there is a qualitative difference in the party-state's response to protests and unregulated cultural and religious expression in Tibet.

**Inter-communal conflict.** Instances of inter-communal violence have been persistent features of Chinese Communist rule of Tibet. The Chinese community has exercised a monopoly on the coercive power of the state, and Chinese authorities have consistently responded to Tibetans' largely non-violent resistance with disproportionate force and attempts to blame Tibetans when violence occurs. Relations between the two communities are presently tense and the trend is worsening.

**Mobilization along lines of community cleavage.** The Chinese community controls the levers of political and economic power in Tibet, leaving Tibetans frustrated and marginalized. State-run media have exacerbated community cleavages with anti-Tibetan propaganda, including ominous calls for a 'people's war' in Tibet. Historically, such community cleavages have heightened the potential for inter-communal violence—such as occurred in Lhasa in March 2008 and in the attacks on Tibetan students in Chengdu in December 2011. In these instances, the cycle of violence escalated quickly and broke down starkly along ethnic lines, as did reactions to it.

**Unjust discriminatory legislation and related measures.** The Chinese party-state's historic narrative casts Tibetans as 'backward' people who require Chinese assistance to modernize. The Chinese state's 'positive discrimination' policies—both those to assist individual Tibetans, such as educational admissions preferences and family planning exceptions, as well as forced province-to-province financial assistance to Tibetan areas—contribute to a view of Tibetans as indolent and ungrateful toward Chinese largesse. After the 2008 protests, ad hoc discriminatory practices targeted Tibetans, some of which continue to the present.

**Hate propaganda.** While Chinese state-owned media arguably has become more plural in recent years, the dominant narratives regarding Tibet are fixed and remain the primary source of information on Tibet for most Chinese. Chinese propaganda narratives on Tibet run in a limited range from soft chauvinist Orientalism to virulent nationalist screeds. Anti-Dalai Lama propaganda increasingly portrays him as a provocateur—including comparing him to Hitler and accusing him of seeking Nazi-style ethnic cleansing of Chinese from Tibet.

**Severe economic disparities.** The Chinese regime remains heavily dependent on economic growth as a key pillar of its political legitimacy, including in Tibet, although many economists consider the PRC's present level and model of economic growth to be unstable and unsustainable.[3] The Tibetan economy is even more unbalanced. It is heavily reliant on Chinese government subsidies, with the additional aspects of mass Chinese migration and domination of economic opportunities, and a shift away from traditional livelihoods through which Tibetans had been self-reliant.

**Additional risk factors.** Two particular internal divisions, both of which are present in the Tibetan context, have historically been among the most powerful triggers of genocidal behavior: differences of religion between the aggressors and victim that serve to alienate and dehumanize the victims; and struggles for greater autonomy, or denial of the right to self-determination. As this report makes clear, the Chinese party-state has zeroed in on religion as the key to their control over Tibet.

The highly contentious question of Chinese legitimacy in Tibet likewise serves as a meta-narrative for Chinese cultural repression, and it is overlaid by the failure of the Chinese party-state's conception of autonomy to adequately address Tibetans' desire for self-determination, particularly as it relates to control over their own cultural destiny. The system of autonomy, as practiced, is predicated on a belief that the Chinese party-state is better positioned than the

Tibetan people to determine what aspects of Tibetan culture are suitable to retain as part of its modernization process in Tibet.

## Cultural Resilience and Cultural Hegemony

The report also highlights the stories of Tibetans who are fighting for their culture in ways both creative and dangerous. While many of these expressions of cultural resilience are hopeful and potentially transformative, some have a much darker aspect. The fact that China's relentless assault on Tibetan culture has failed to wipe it out entirely or turn it into a commoditized museum culture is primarily due to the tenacity and cultural resilience of the Tibetan people.

While the dynamic of repression and resistance has created and exacerbated tensions between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples, this is not the pre-determined outcome for these two societies. There is a different, mutually beneficial path that is possible for both the Chinese and Tibetan peoples, but it will require a fundamental re-evaluation of China's present approach in Tibet. This re-evaluation must start with China seeing Tibetans' demands for cultural rights, including as they relate to Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama, not as something to be drummed out of them, but rather as critical elements of the way forward.

Given the role that China is now playing and aspires to play in the world, the Chinese Communist Party's attitude toward Tibetan culture has serious implications beyond the Tibetan context. This report highlights the dangers of leaving Chinese cultural aggression against Tibetans unchecked at a time when the Chinese government is undertaking a massive effort to shape Chinese culture at home and expand its cultural influence abroad.

By reiterating the link between attempted destruction of culture and the use of state-sanctioned violence targeted against a vulnerable people, this report urges policy makers to act upon states' obligations to address these human rights violations in a more robust and systematic fashion.

## Recommendations

The Chinese state bears responsibility for the cultural devastation it is perpetrating in Tibet, and this report recommends a number of steps it can take to reverse the present negative cycle. These include:

- Cease systematic violations of human and group rights, especially those targeting Tibetan culture and religion and attacks on the Tibetans as an ethnic group;
- Suspend and subsequently amend, through genuinely consultative processes with Tibetans, the policies that most negatively impact Tibetan culture;
- Engage with the Dalai Lama and his representatives to address the immediate crisis gripping Tibet and develop solutions to the present flawed autonomy system in Tibet; and
- Establish frameworks for independent assessments of the current situation and the most appropriate policy responses.

The international community also has a clear role to play in addressing this situation and trying to move it onto a different trajectory. Beyond the preservation of Tibet's unique culture, the nature of China's attacks raises serious concerns. For those in the genocide prevention and elimination field, the Chinese government's behavior in Tibet should hold substantial interest as an important test case for early warning systems that attempt to address pre-genocidal behavior. ICT's recommendations for the international community include:

- Call on the Chinese authorities to change their polices in Tibet. Like-minded countries should utilize all available bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, including those targeted to the prevention of mass atrocities, to call attention to and establish Chinese responsibility for the ongoing attacks on the cultural rights and identity of Tibetans.

- Expand monitoring of the situation in Tibet and programmatic efforts to reach out to and support Tibetan communities directly. Continue to push for greater access to Tibet. Initiate or elevate efforts to establish a diplomatic presence in Lhasa, and expand existing channels for monitoring.

- Relevant UN agencies and international financial institutions should do more to recognize and address factors related to the potential for cultural destruction in their programmatic interventions in China and Tibet. Investors and donors working in Tibetan areas should adhere to a code of conduct and development guidelines that focus on sustainable, community-supported projects that integrate Tibetans' views into project design and implementation at all phases.

[1] The International Commission of Jurists found in 1960 that "acts of genocide had been committed in Tibet in an attempt to destroy the Tibetans as a religious group…", International Commission of Jurists, *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, a Report to the International Commission of Jurists by its Legal Inquiry Committee on Tibet*, (Geneva: International Commission of Jurists, 1960), p. 346.

[2] International Commission of Jurists, *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, a Report to the International Commission of Jurists by its Legal Inquiry Committee on Tibet*, (Geneva: International Commission of Jurists, 1960), p. 346.

[3] Sam Riley, "China growth 'unsustainable' cautions expert," August 17, 2011, *www.top100funds.com.*



# INTRODUCTION

On March 16, 2011—three years after Tibet experienced the largest and most widespread protests in decades, and more than 60 years after China 'peacefully liberated' Tibet—a 20-year-old Buddhist monk named Phuntsog walked from his home at Kirti Monastery into the center of Ngaba (Chinese: Aba) town in eastern Tibet. His robes were soaked in kerosene and when—shouting slogans for the long life of the Dalai Lama—he set himself ablaze, there was insufficient time for anyone to stop him. The police nonetheless beat him on the ground while attempting to put out the flames. Local people intervened in order to protect him and managed to take him back to the monastery. He died later in the hospital. By evening, the Chinese People's Armed Police (PAP) had Kirti Monastery under lockdown. Ngaba town itself was likewise soon blanketed by PAP troops.

At the time of writing, 31 Tibetans in Tibet have followed Phuntsog—who himself followed another Kirti monk named Tapey who self-immolated in February 2009—in setting themselves on fire to protest what they felt to be intolerable conditions of Chinese misrule in Tibet.[1] They have included other monks and former monks of Kirti Monastery, monks from other areas in Tibet, Tibetan nuns, a reincarnate lama, and more recently, Tibetan lay people, including a mother of four. In their final moments, these Tibetans have called for the long-life and the return of the Dalai Lama, and some demanded freedom and independence for Tibetans. The sites of most of the self-immolations, Ngaba and neighboring Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures in the present day Chinese province of Sichuan, have historically been among the frontlines of Sino-Tibetan conflict due to their proximity to areas historically inhabited by Chinese. Kirti Monastery is one of the largest monasteries in Tibet, and the 130-year-old institution is an influential center of Buddhist scholarship in eastern Tibet.

Monks and laypeople have attributed the self-immolations to a sense of desperation about severe repression of religious and cultural rights, which has been particularly intense since protests swept across Tibet in 2008, including at Kirti Monastery. While the majority of self-immolations have occurred in the Ngaba and Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures in Sichuan province, self-immolations have spread to the Tibet Autonomous Region and Tibetan autonomous areas of Qinghai and Gansu provinces. The Chinese government's reaction to this unprecedented challenge has been to intensify its security approach. In noting that these areas have become the current center of Tibetan resistance to Chinese authority, Human Rights Watch found that even before the self-immolations, per capita spending on security in these two prefectures dwarfed what was spent in every other prefecture of Sichuan Province.[2] Reports out of eastern Tibet as the wave of self-immolations intensified during the fall of 2011 showed a territory and a people simmering under siege.

Three monks who Chinese authorities accused of 'intentional homicide' by assisting Phuntsog were given long prison sentences in August 2011,[3] the first known Chinese use of legal prosecutions in this fashion.[4] Following Phuntsog's self-immolation, authorities placed Kirti Monastery under lockdown and there were reports that authorities prevented the delivery of water and food into the monastery, and that at least 300 Kirti monks had been detained at a secret location and subjected to intense interrogation and 're-education' by the security forces.[5] The Chinese authorities' designation of the self-immolations as "terrorism in disguise" in late October prompted concerns that the severe anti-terror approach that has characterized Beijing's response to unrest in Xinjiang would migrate to Tibet. In the already heavily militarized Tibetan capital of Lhasa, hundreds of miles from Ngaba and Kardze, the security presence was again dramatically expanded. In January 2012, Chinese authorities announced that the TAR would again be closed to all foreigners for at least a month, beginning around *Losar* or Tibetan New Year until the end of March.[6]

In analyzing the causes of these terrible events, the Chinese have fallen into a familiar pattern: attack the Dalai Lama and blame him for unrest in Tibet. The Chinese foreign ministry accused the Dalai Lama of encouraging the self-immolations after he led prayers for the victims in his exile

home of Dharamsala, India. Ngaba Prefecture's religious affairs bureau officials reportedly expressed their "disgust" with the exile head of Kirti Monastery, Kirti Rinpoche, accusing him by name and others outside Tibet of instigating the self-immolations.[7] As the number of self-immolations increased during the fall of 2011, the government's rhetoric took a darker turn. In a bizarre and disturbing editorial, the Chinese Communist Party mouthpiece, *People's Daily*, on October 31, compared the Dalai Lama to David Koresh, the self-styled messianic leader of the Branch Davidian cult, and seemed to presage a similar outcome for the Tibetan religious leader, even invoking the U.S. government's use of tanks in its armed assault on the Davidians' Waco, Texas compound.[8]

On March 25, 2012, the official Xinhua news agency carried a posting from China's major Tibetan website *www.tibet.cn* that attacked the Dalai Lama as advocating policies that would result in the expulsion of ethnic Chinese from Tibetan areas of the People's Republic of China. "The remarks of the Dalai Lama remind us of the uncontrolled and cruel Nazis during the Second World War," the commentary stated, adding, "Behind the Dalai Lama's concepts of 'Middle Way Approach' and 'high-level autonomy' is actually the idea of ethnic separation. How similar it is to the Holocaust committed by Hitler on the Jewish!"[9] The authorities also have escalated their nationalistic rhetoric directed at the Chinese domestic audience, pledging that the government would "firmly oppose ethnic separatism …resolutely protect national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and firmly oppose any country using the excuse of the so-called Tibet problem to interfere in China."[10]

Tibetans' use of self-immolations on this scale as a form of protest against Chinese misrule may be unprecedented, but both Beijing's response to this dramatic escalation and the repression that led to this point are nothing new. This is merely the latest chapter in the Chinese Communist Party's 60-plus-year effort to pacify and assimilate Tibetans into the People's Republic of China (PRC). The newly formed PRC would ultimately justify its 1949–50 invasion of Tibet by depicting it as a "hell on earth ravaged by feudal exploitation."[11] The PRC characterized its invasion as both a redemptive project for the benefit of the Tibetan people and the fulfillment of the Chinese Communist Party's own dreams of reunifying the territories that were deemed to be China's by virtue of having been within its imperial footprint at its height. The Chinese party-state's attacks on Tibetan Buddhism and culture are not just ancillary effects of this state and nation-building effort, but rather represent a central weapon in it. This is clear from the repeated ideological campaigns that the Chinese party-state has directed toward Tibet since its initial invasion, with the post-2008 crackdown that continues into the present as merely the latest manifestation. Given the plethora of resources (human, material, political, and otherwise) that the Chinese party-state has at its disposal to carry out its long-term assimilation goals in Tibet, the threat posed by Beijing's cultural attacks on the Tibetan people is grave and worthy of a considered response by those who believe that an organic, self-perpetuating Tibetan culture is worth preserving.

The use of the term 'cultural genocide' in relation to the situation in Tibet dates back at least to the 1980s,[12] and followed from the 1960 findings of the International Commission of Jurists that there was *prima facie* evidence that the PRC was committing genocide, as defined in the 1948 Convention on Genocide, in Tibet.[13] In 1993, the Dalai Lama used the term 'cultural genocide' in his annual March 10 address to the Tibetan people, noting:

> *[T]he situation in Tibet continues to remain bleak. Merciless repression of the slightest political dissent is the order. The demographic aggression of Tibet through a policy of population transfer continues unabated, escalating the marginalisation of the Tibetan people and the assimilation of the Tibetan way of life into the Chinese mainstream. Cultural genocide is being committed, intentionally or unintentionally. Tibet, an ancient country on the roof of the world, is fast becoming a Chinese colony.*[14]

This characterization of the situation by the exiled spiritual and national leader of the Tibetan people has since been repeated by those sympathetic to Tibet's plight. Likewise, the Chinese government has denied this claim both directly and through proxies who cite the many achievements of Chinese rule over Tibet, ascribing the changes in

Tibet to a positive process of modernization. Over time, this profound disagreement over the degree to which Tibetan culture is under intentional assault from Chinese authorities has become a key point of contention between the Tibetan and Chinese leaderships. This is unsurprising given the seriousness of the charge, the inherently political nature of this issue, and the severe constraints the Chinese authorities have placed on those who wish to conduct independent analysis of the development of Tibetan culture since 1950.

In addressing this controversial issue, this report examines a broad range of sources—including the testimonies of individual Tibetans, the writings of Tibetan, Chinese and foreign scholars, reports of the International Commission of Jurists and other investigative sources, international human rights conventions, the work of various UN organs, and Chinese official sources. The report will present compelling evidence that the Chinese state's policies and practices related to Tibetan culture have created conditions that violate key international human rights instruments and contain elements of cultural genocide. While there is no question that the various elements that comprise 'cultural genocide' are prohibited under international human rights law, these elements have not been formally bound together and recognized as a specific violation. The continuous and severe nature of these violations, and their damaging effects among Tibetans, makes a strong case that this 'hole in the law' should be redressed through further development of a cultural genocide framework.

This report attempts to advance the discussion about cultural genocide in Tibet by: establishing a baseline for cultural genocide via a definition rooted in the conventional international legal discourse; placing this definition within the dynamic scholarly and political discourse around genocide prevention and the Responsibility to Protect; presenting Chinese cultural destruction in Tibet as a case study of the perpetration of cultural genocide; and urging the development of a model for preventative and remedial action by the international community. In doing so, this report will show that the international community is obliged to concern itself with the situation in Tibet as a matter of effective human rights advocacy and as part of the overall trend toward the development of a more comprehensive regime for preventing and combating genocide and related offenses.

Regardless of whether there is an international legal regime under which a charge of cultural genocide can be applied to the Chinese government, a persuasive argument can be made that the Tibetan culture is being significantly dismantled where it matters most to Tibetans, and redefined by the Chinese state for its own purposes. The following issues are the focal points of this examination of Chinese government policies and practices in Tibet:

1. The expressed views—via statements, policies and other means—of Chinese authorities with regard to the elements of Tibetan culture;

2. The actual treatment of the major cultural markers of Tibetan identity, particularly religion (i.e. Tibetan Buddhism) and language;

3. The development and implementation of socio-economic policies that rely upon or necessarily result in the disruption of Tibetan cultural patterns, livelihoods, or demographic distribution or dominance; and

4. The ability of Tibetans to exert effective control over their own cultural destiny.

By examining the historical record up to the present day, particularly the documented actions and attitudes of successive Chinese Communist leaders who have shaped and continue to shape China's Tibet policy, this report will focus on the underlying causes of cultural destruction in Tibet and how they are deeply embedded in the political structure of the People's Republic of China (PRC). By reiterating the link between attempted destruction of culture and the use of state-sanctioned violence against a vulnerable people that Raphael Lemkin emphasized in developing the concept of genocide,[15] this report compels the international community to acknowledge the gravity of the situation in Tibet and develop a comprehensive response to it before such abuse reaches irreversible dimensions.

This report highlights the responsibilities of the Chinese government, not only as the perpetrator of human rights abuses against the Tibetan people but also in their self-

selected role as the primary guarantor of Tibetans' cultural rights—a role they have honored primarily in the breach. From Chinese authorities' active interference in the system of reincarnating lamas who sustain a spiritual lineage, to the persecution of Tibetan artists, writers and musicians whose vision of Tibetan culture diverges from the official narrative, this report will demonstrate that China has intentionally failed in its basic obligations to the Tibetan people living under its dominion. This report highlights the dangers of leaving Chinese cultural aggression against Tibetans unchecked at a time when the Chinese government is undertaking a massive effort to shape Chinese culture at home and expand its cultural influence abroad.

The report will also highlight the stories of Tibetans who, against overwhelming odds, are fighting for their culture in ways both creative and dangerous. From the monks dying in Kham and Amdo to the young Tibetan rappers whose work appears on YouTube and its Chinese equivalents, Tibetans are engaged in a diverse array of efforts to assert ownership of their culture inside Tibet and beyond its borders. While many of these expressions of cultural resilience are hopeful and potentially transformative, some have a much darker aspect. All represent, in their own way, a people who are fiercely committed to the preservation of their own culture despite the efforts of a large, well-resourced power to usurp that role. By focusing not just on what China is doing to destroy Tibetan culture, but also on what Tibetans are doing to save it, the report demonstrates that an alternate narrative is possible—one that does not rely on the use and abuse of coercive power by a state that insists on enforcing its own self-aggrandizing vision of a culture rather than allowing that culture to develop and modernize organically according to the preferences of its own practitioners.

[1] International Campaign for Tibet, "Self-Immolation Fact Sheet," available at *www.savetibet.org/resource-center/maps-data-fact-sheets/self-immolation-fact-sheet.*

[2] Human Rights Watch, *China: End Crackdown on Tibetan Monasteries*, October 12, 2011; available at *http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/12/china-end-crackdown-tibetan-monasteries.*

[3] ICT, "Monks imprisoned for 10-13 years following self-immolation by Kirti monk," August 31, 2011, *www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/monks-imprisoned-10-13-years-following-self-immolation-kirti-monk.*

[4] Global Post, *Tibetan Monks Sentenced in Self-Immolation Case*, August 30, 2011; available at: *http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/china/110830/china-tibet-monks-self-immolation.*

[5] ICT, "Protests, tensions escalate in Ngaba following self-immolation of monk: Kirti monastery under lockdown," April 11, 2011, available at *www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/protests-tensions-escalate-ngaba-following-self-immolation-monk-kirti-monastery-under-lock.*

[6] Associated Press, "China to close Tibet to foreigners for at least a month," January 19, 2012, *http://asiancorrespondent.com/74189/china-to-again-close-tibet-during-sensitive-period/.*

[7] Reuters, *Police shoot Tibetans, nun burns to death: group*, October 18, 2011; available at: *http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/18/us-china-tibetans-protest-idUSTRE79H0H020111018.*

[8] Reuters, *China invokes Waco siege in denouncing Dalai Lama*, October 31, 2011; available at: *http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/31/us-china-dalai-idUSTRE79U0SP20111031.*

[9] *http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-03/24/content_14905520.htm.*

[10] Reuters, *China says to get tough after Tibet burnings*, October 20, 2011; available at: *http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/20/us-china-tibetans-burnings-idUSTRE79J1IT20111020.*

[11] Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows: A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*, (New York, Columbia University Press: 1999); p. xxii.

[12] The first documented use of the term "cultural genocide" in the Tibetan context appears to have been a statement by French criminal lawyer and former Justice Minister (1981-1986) Robert Badinter, who made the comment while appearing on the French television program *Apostrophes* with the Dalai Lama. (video available at: *http://www.ina.fr/art-et-culture/litterature/video/CPB89005126/les-droits-de-l-homme.fr.html*).

[13] International Commission of Jurists, Report on Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, (Geneva: 1960), p. 346.

[14] The March 10, 1993 Speech of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, available at: *http://www.dalailama.com/messages/tibet/10th-march-archive/1993.*

[15] Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944); *http://www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/AxisRule1944-1.htm.*



# CULTURAL GENOCIDE: A WORKING DEFINITION

*Genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor.*

*—Raphael Lemkin, Axis Rule in Occupied Europe (1944)*

Since the Polish-Jewish jurist Raphael Lemkin coined the term 'genocide' in the aftermath of the Holocaust and World War II, this word has become one of the most powerful and challenging in the international human rights and legal lexicon. After overcoming states' early resistance to the concept, the prohibition on genocide—and an affirmative duty to prevent it—has become enshrined as a first principle of international law, universally regarded as the most serious of crimes against humanity.[1] The establishment of international legal principles around genocide has also been accompanied by a rich scholarship and the development of case law through international tribunals held in the aftermath of the mass atrocities of the last century.

While genocide studies have in some ways sought to deemphasize the original focus on ethnicity as an essential element of genocide victim groups, there has simultaneously been a renewed appreciation for Lemkin's idea of cultural genocide, primarily as a marker of potential violence against persecuted groups and as evidence of intent if that potential should become reality. While the law has not yet come around to recognizing cultural genocide as a specific violation of international law, the various elements that comprised earlier attempts to codify have increasingly been recognized as important potential warning signs of mass atrocity. As is demonstrated by the case of Tibet, there continues to be a need for further development of cultural genocide as both a legal concept and as a tool for advancing genocide prevention, protection, and remediation efforts.

In 1933, more than a decade before he coined the term 'genocide' and at a time when he was studying the Ottoman Empire's mass killing of its Christian inhabitants, Lemkin was fixated on the destruction of cultural patrimony as a key element of national destruction. His initial efforts to formulate a construct for national destruction revolved around two concepts: "barbarity," which referred to the "premeditated destruction of national, racial, religious and social collectivities;" and "vandalism," which he described as the "destruction of works of art and culture, being the expression of the particular genius of these collectivities."[2] His focus on ethnic groups as the subjects of genocide grew out of what he saw as their unique "culture-carrying capacity" and the irreversibility of cultural destruction once it had taken place.[3] Lemkin saw this cultural element as essential to genocide's uniqueness as a crime against humanity, as opposed to the killing of political groups or others who may be targeted for mass killings.

In the 1944 book where he coined the term 'genocide,' *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Lemkin wrote:

> *By 'genocide' we mean the destruction of an ethnic group… Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor.*[4]

After defining the term and helping to document its application under Germany's Third Reich, Lemkin set about getting the newly established United Nations to enshrine the banning of genocide into international law. The initial draft of the UN Convention on the Prevention of and Punish-

ment of the Crime of Genocide prepared by the UN Secretary General and ad hoc Committee on Genocide included as a draft Article III the following language on cultural genocide:

> *In this Convention genocide also means any deliberate act committed with the intent to destroy the language, religion or culture of a national, racial or religious group on grounds of national or racial origin or religious belief such as: prohibiting the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group; destroying, or preventing the use of, libraries, museums, schools, historical monuments, places of worship or other cultural institutions and objects of the groups.*[5]

After a vigorous debate that often broke down along ideological lines, this language was not adopted into the final version of the Genocide Convention.[6] While early drafts show that, true to Lemkin's original construct, cultural genocide was very much on the minds of the convention drafters, its inclusion was ultimately a victim of the emerging Cold War and a related disagreement over the inclusion of minority rights in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.[7]

It was the communist and Arab delegations that most vigorously supported inclusion of the elements of cultural genocide in the Genocide Convention, relying heavily on the argument that there was an "organic connection" between cultural genocide and subsequent physical violence against a targeted group.[8] Meanwhile, the largely democratic countries of the western hemisphere and Anglo-American tradition stood in opposition, with the United States and others expressing concerns about diluting the concept of genocide by including a concept of cultural genocide that by definition does not require the physical killing of individuals.[9]

Despite its non-inclusion in the Genocide Convention, the United Nations and the international human rights movement have remained interested in cultural genocide and issues of minority persecution, and there have been continued attempts to incorporate these issues into other human rights instruments. The right to participate in one's cultural development was recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and later affirmed in both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The ICCPR also specifically addressed minority cultural rights in Article 27, which states that "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language."[10]

The term cultural genocide reappeared in a 1994 draft of Article 7 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The draft Article 7 stated that:

> *Indigenous people have the collective and individual right not to be subjected to ethnocide and cultural genocide, including prevention of and redress for:*
>
> *a. Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities;*
>
> *b. Any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources;*
>
> *c. Any form of forced population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of their rights;*
>
> *d. Any form of forced assimilation or integration;*
>
> *e. Any form of propaganda designed to promote or incite racial or ethnic discrimination directed against them.*[11]

Although the words 'ethnocide' and 'cultural genocide' were again dropped in the final text adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 12, 2007, the rest of this provision was retained under a prohibition against forced assimilation or destruction of culture.[12] This definition and the un-adopted draft Article 3 from the 1948 Genocide Convention remain the most authoritative international statements on the elements of cultural genocide.

After decades of substantial global effort to entrench a doctrine of genocide prevention at the international, national and sub-national levels, there continue to be attempts to annihilate racial, ethnic, religious and political groups, and the international community has continued to find its response to these horrors lacking. As the legal status of genocide has developed through scholarship and practice, the recognition of a deliberate attempt to annihilate a targeted group as reaching the threshold of 'genocide' has become less of a legal, factual designation and more of a political decision. The recent cases of Darfur and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the unsettled debates over whether and when those situations may have constituted genocide, are but the latest sad examples of this trend. They are unlikely to be the last. Even when a case has been broadly recognized as constituting genocide, international legal mechanisms have tended to charge perpetrators with other crimes against humanity that have proven easier to define and prosecute, and which impose the same penalties as genocide convictions.

Given the immense challenges in addressing this most heinous crime against humanity, there continues to be an understandable resistance to and criticism of ideas that seem to dilute the visceral nature of the term 'genocide' by qualifying it or delinking it from mass atrocities. The debate over 'cultural genocide'—particularly the definitional issues of whether cultural destruction other than or absent physical killing can constitute genocide—is one of the oldest controversies in genocide studies and law.[13] In developing this report, there was a keen awareness of the complexities around the invocation of 'genocide' in this context. As such, the decision to use the term 'cultural genocide' and warn the international community of its danger in this report was not taken lightly, but rather arrived at through extensive consultation with international human rights law experts and a comprehensive review of the evidence compared to the standards they suggested. It became clear, through this process of going back to the origins of the term 'genocide' and its essential precursors, as well as through surveys of more recent scholarship and practice on the subject, that the concept of cultural genocide has legitimate and valuable applications, including in the context of Tibet, even if it has yet to acquire a definitive operational legal character.

For the purposes of this report and its analysis of Chinese rule in Tibet, it was therefore necessary to develop a working definition of the term 'cultural genocide.' The definition ICT has developed draws exclusively from the articles on cultural genocide put forward as part of the preparatory work on the Genocide Convention and the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. While not a definitive explication, ICT believes this working definition provides the key elements that could one day comprise an international legal standard for cultural genocide. As such, when used in this report, 'cultural genocide' refers to:

> *Any deliberate act committed with the intent to destroy the language, religion or culture of a national, racial or religious group on grounds of national or racial origin or religious belief such as:*
>
> *a. Any action with the aim or effect of depriving the targeted group of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities, including but not limited to:*
>
> *i. Prohibiting the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group;*
>
> *ii. Destroying, or preventing the use of, libraries, museums, schools, historical monuments, places of worship or other cultural institutions and objects of the group;*
>
> *b. Any action with the aim or effect of dispossessing the targeted group of their lands, territories or resources;*
>
> *c. Any form of forced population transfer with the aim or effect of violating or undermining any rights of the targeted group;*
>
> *d. Any form of forced assimilation or integration;*
>
> *e. Any form of propaganda designed to promote or incite racial or ethnic discrimination directed against the targeted group.*

While efforts toward incorporating cultural genocide into 'hard' international legal standards have thus far met with limited success, there is no question that the violations of human and group rights characterized as the elements cultural genocide are prohibited under conventional international human rights law. Moreover, the concept has retained a role in the development of a robust genocide prevention discourse and has arguably created opportunity for further expansion of the field. While this dynamic raises challenges from those who are concerned that a looser reading of the Genocide Convention will render the term 'genocide' banal through careless application, those who believe rigid formulations could result in the failure to act in dangerous pre-genocidal or genocide-like situations have welcomed it.[14]

As a result of the concerns of the latter group, there is a movement toward a broadened conception of genocide that encompasses the intention to eliminate a group's culture-carrying capacity. It links practices intended to undermine cultural institutions—whether through restrictions on use of a group's language, restrictions on its traditional practices, destruction of religious institutions and objects, the persecution of spiritual teachers, or attacks on cultural figures and intellectuals—to the physical genocide that has been the focal point of conventional genocide prohibitions. While there remains an implicit consensus that genocide must include an element of mass killing, leading genocide scholars have found studies of the destruction of 'social power' and group culture—arguably the central elements of cultural genocide—among the most important areas of investigation in the field.[15]

Scholars and practitioners are particularly interested in the evidence of cultural destruction as a precursor to the kind of group-focused physical violence that would constitute genocide under a more restrictive delineation of the crime. As leading genocide scholar Adam Jones notes:

> *[Acts of desecration] occupy a position on the genocidal continuum…they not only point to everyday patterns of anathematization and exclusion that may otherwise be overlooked, but may serve as harbingers of serious acts of violence against targeted groups—up to and including genocidal outbreaks. As such, they should prompt serious concern in the national communities in question, and the international community as well.*[16]

Likewise, genocide scholar Martin Shaw has focused on how the essence of genocide resides in the perpetrators' effort to destroy a group's 'social power.'[17] Lemkin, too, "insisted that a racial, national or religious group cannot continue to exist unless it preserves its spiritual and moral unity."[18]

A focus on identifying 'early warning systems' to prevent genocide has contributed to the emergence of the 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine. The 'Responsibility to Protect' or R2P is a normative approach to preventing genocide that identifies, as part of a state's sovereignty, a responsibility to protect its own citizens from abuses and atrocities. It also recognizes a corollary responsibility of states to respond, "where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it."[19] In 2005, the United Nations held a world summit, at which the heads of state and government that were present (including the Chinese government) agreed to the following declaration:

> *Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. We accept that responsibility and will act in accordance with it. The international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise this responsibility and support the United Nations in establishing an early warning capability.*
>
> *The international community, through the United Nations, also has the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. In this context, we are prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner, through the Security*

> *Council, in accordance with the Charter, including Chapter VII, on a case-by-case basis and in cooperation with relevant regional organizations as appropriate, should peaceful means be inadequate and national authorities manifestly fail to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We stress the need for the General Assembly to continue consideration of the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and its implications, bearing in mind the principles of the Charter and international law. We also intend to commit ourselves, as necessary and appropriate, to helping States build capacity to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and* ***to assisting those which are under stress before crises and conflicts break out*** *(emphasis added).*[20]

In 2011, the Obama Administration formalized the U.S. commitment to R2P through a presidential directive on the prevention of mass atrocities. This directive established a new inter-agency coordination mechanism focused on the prevention of mass atrocities, and new authority to bar entry to the United States by those implicated in these crimes against humanity.[21]

Official support for R2P compels governments to collectively intervene when a state fails to protect its populations in situations deemed 'genocidal' or 'pre-genocidal' and therefore can provoke a good deal of political maneuvering. From a practical perspective, in the two most recent applications of the R2P concept in the UN Security Council, China has worked to slow down in the case of Libya, or veto in the case of Syria, international action to stop mass atrocities.[22] China has expressed unease about intervention and has asserted that its willingness to work with others on R2P is focused on "building the capacity within states to prevent mass atrocities, and strengthening the UN's ability to assist states to mitigate mass atrocities through humanitarian, diplomatic and other peaceful means… Beijing is adamantly averse to non-consensual military intervention, even when state leaders abet or are themselves the perpetrators of mass atrocities."[23]

The Chinese view stands in tension with the predominant recognition in the international legal and human rights communities of the state as the elemental actor in genocide. Its role in the imposition of order upon fragmented and internally diverse societies has been a leading cause of mass violence over the past 500 years. The development of the modern bureaucratic state, linked to conceptions of nationality, has in some ways made possible modern genocide, with its systematic, efficient, diverse and widespread capacity to target and eliminate its victims within its territory. Likewise, the linkages between imperialism, and its cousin colonialism, and genocide are considered undisputed among genocide scholars.[24] The relationships between and among genocide and the imperatives of empire, state-formation and revolutionary ideology remain essential lines of inquiry in the modern study of genocide. The behavior of modern empires—including the Soviet and Chinese Communist ones—has been of particular interest to scholars.

In the dynamic field of the study and application of the concept of genocide in international law and practice, the 1948 Convention remains the essential signpost; but in many ways it has served as the beginning of the conversation about genocide, not the end. The discourse on genocide continues to be pushed forward and expanded, both through the development of case law in international criminal tribunals, and the actual practice of scholars, NGOs and others who directly work in preventing and dealing with the aftermath of genocide.

Activists and scholars working in this field have come to a recognition that 'hard law' alone is woefully insufficient to stop the scourge of genocide, and that more creative strategies—particularly in the areas of prevention, advocacy and mobilization—must be developed. As such, scholars have now identified a set of indicators or 'red flags' that most reliably predict an impending genocide, many of which mirror or involve elements of cultural genocide. While these are not hard and fast rules, they see these conditions as creating an enabling environment for genocide.[25] These indicators include: severe and systemic state repression; a history of genocide and inter-communal conflict; mobilization along lines of community cleavage; unjust

discriminatory legislation and related measures; hate propaganda; and severe economic crisis. As the subsequent sections of this report will show, these indicators closely track the environment that is present and emerging in Tibet and the trends of Chinese governance in Tibet that most strongly threaten Tibetan cultural expression.

[1] Patricia Wald, "Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity," Washington University Global Studies Law Review, Vol. 6, No. 3, p. 624.

[2] Adam Jones, *Genocide: A comprehensive introduction*, 2nd edition (New York, Routledge: 2006, 2011), p. 9.

[3] Jones, *Genocide*, p. 11.

[4] Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944); available at: http://*www.preventgenocide.org/lemkin/AxisRule1944–1.htm.*

[5] *Draft Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, U.N. ESCOR, Commission on Human Rights, art. 3, U.N. Doc. E/447 (1947) [hereinafter Draft Convention].

[6] *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, adopted 9 December 1948, 78 UNTS 277 (entered into force 12 January 1951; entered into force for U.S. 23 February 1989) [hereinafter Genocide Convention or Convention on Genocide].

[7] See e.g., Johannes Morsink, "Cultural Genocide, the Universal Declaration, and Minority Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 21 (Johns Hopkins University Press: 1999), pp. 1009–1060.

[8] Morsink, 21 Human Rights Q. p. 1029.

[9] Morsink, 21 Human Rights Q. p. 1024.

[10] *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, adopted December 16, 1966, 21 UN GAOR Supp. (No.16) at 52, UN Doc A/6316 (1966) (entered into force March 23, 1976).

[11] *Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, prepared and approved by the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities; article 7. Available at: *http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/%28symbol%29/e.cn.4.sub.2.res.1994.45.en?opendocument.*

[12] *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN General Assembly, 13 September 2007). UN document #: A/61/L.67 and add. 1.

[13] Jones, *Genocide*, p. 30.

[14] Jones, *Genocide*, pp. 20–21.

[15] Jones, *Genocide*, pp. 23–31.

[16] Jones, *Genocide*, p. 32.

[17] See generally Martin Shaw, *What is Genocide?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

[18] William Schabas, *Genocide in International Law: The Crimes of Crimes*, (Galway: 2000) p. 180.

[19] International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect*, December 2001, p. XI.

[20] United Nations General Assembly, *2005 World Summit Outcome*, document number A/60/L.1, September 15, 2005, paragraphs 138 and 139.

[21] The White House, "Fact sheet: President Obama Directs New Steps to Prevent Mass Atrocities and Impose Consequences on Serious Human Rights Violators," August 4, 2011. Available at: *http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/04/fact-sheet-president-obama-directs-new-steps-prevent-mass-atrocities-and.*

[22] United Nations Security Council, "Security Council Fails to Adopt Draft Resolution Condemning Syria's Crackdown on Anti-Government Protestors, Owing to Veto by Russian Federation, China," October 4, 2011; available: *http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10403.doc.htm.*

[23] Sarah Teitt, "China and the Responsibility to Protect," *Asia-Pacific Center for the Responsibility to Protect*, December 19, 2008, p. 18. Available at: *http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13533312.2011.563085#preview.*

[24] Jones, pp. 66–81.

[25] For discussion of these "red flags", see, e.g.: Jones, *Genocide* at p. 569–571; Thomas Cushman, "Is Genocide Preventable? Some Theoretical Considerations," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 5: 4 (2003); Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).



# EARLY TIBETAN CULTURE

*As Tibet formed, with Buddhism as the oxygen of its state, Tibetan society was shaped by topography: far away and hard to penetrate.*

*—Ross Terrill, The New Chinese Empire*

Distinct from China in geography, religious heritage and political evolution, Tibet's cultural foundations are and have been under threat from Chinese policies of repression and assimilation since the invasion and occupation of Tibet in the mid–20th century. This historical background provides the basis for understanding the roots of Tibetan culture as well as the strength of Tibetans' resolve in the face of China's cultural repression.

Over the past 2,000 years, in the unique environs of the Tibetan plateau and Himalayan regions, the Tibetan people developed a civilizational culture characterized by its own written and spoken language, astrology and calendar, medical system, methods of agriculture and animal herding, sciences and arts, architecture and bridge building, a monumental body of literature, both oral and written, and rich spiritual traditions. This civilization was rooted in the geography, climate and topography of Tibet, and existed in harmony with them.

The arrival of Buddhism from India in the 7th century transformed Tibet's social order and dramatically impacted its cultural development. The role of the ordained and the monastic institutions in the cultivation of Tibetan Buddhism and the devotion of ordinary Tibetans to the practice of the Buddhadharma became central to Tibetan culture and shaped Tibet's subsequent historical development. At the same time, Tibetans incorporated traditional pre-Buddhist elements into their emerging Dharma-centered culture and remained a multi-confessional society, with secular popular cultural elements that coexisted and thrived alongside the profound.

Contrary to popular conceptions of Tibet as an isolated Shangri-la, the Tibetan empire and society was open to influences from neighboring cultures, and likewise exercised cultural influence across Central, South and East Asia throughout its history. Tibet in the past was an active, sometimes a dominant, player in the cross-cultural pollination of Asia. Ancient Tibet energetically drew rich and diverse cultural influences as far afield as Iran, possibly Greece and Rome, Central Asia, Nepal, India, China, Burma and Mongolia.

Tibet's physical location and environment has been one of the most influential factors in the evolution of its ethnic, cultural and national identity. Tibet is located on the largest high-altitude plateau in the world—rising 4,000 meters (13,000 feet) above sea level on average—and is geographically and ecologically distinct from its surrounding areas. It is bordered by the Himalayan, Karakoram and Pamir Mountains on its west and south, the Takla Makan Desert to its north, and the dramatic gorges of the *Gyalmo Ngulchu* or Salween, *Dzachu* or Mekong, *Drichu* or Yangtze and *Machu* or Yellow Rivers in the east. The plateau slopes from the virtually uninhabitable mountain desert of the Changtang, down to the forests and gorges of present-day northern Yunnan in the southeast. The major rivers of Asia—the *Senge Khabab* or Indus, *Langchen Khabab* or Sutlej, *Yarlung Tsangpo* or Brahmaputra, *Gyalmo Ngulchu* or Salween, *Dzachu* or Mekong, *Drichu* or Yangtze and *Machu* or Yellow—have their headwaters in Tibet.

The Tibetan plateau is the world's highest and largest plateau, roughly 2.5 million square kilometers (.97 million square miles). Its climate varies among five distinct zones: the mountain desert of the northwest; the alpine desert of the northeast; the central alpine grassland; the southeastern alpine forests; and the mountain steppe of the southeast. Early Tibetans are believed to be descended from a branch of the Ch'iang peoples who lived along the western borders of China from as early as 1700 B.C. and had contact with the Shang Dynasty.[1] There were also indigenous people living on the southeastern and southern Tibetan plateau, known as the Mon, who were both displaced (to present day Burma) by and absorbed within the Tibetan

community that developed. Some studies have suggested the possibility of Indo-European additions to the Tibetan population via contact with the peoples of the Altic plains of Central Asia.[2]

Regardless of the nature of their earlier connections, Tibetans and Chinese developed along highly differentiated paths from a relatively early time—beginning at least 5,200 years ago[3]—to form two distinct ethnic groups. Because of the topography of Tibet, the Tibetan people did not develop a rice-cultivating agricultural society as the Chinese did. Rather, Tibetans were largely nomadic pastoralists who ranged across the Tibetan plateau's vast grasslands and mountainous terrain with animals suited to the challenging conditions. In their work, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson note:

> *The legacy of [Tibetans'] origin is seen in the extensive nature of Tibetan farming with its ever-present element of animal husbandry… Tibetan-speaking peoples seem to have made their way ever further westwards across the southern part of the Tibetan uplands round about the beginning of the Christian era. This is confirmed to some extent by literary sources that enable us to trace the movement of certain important clans from northeastern Tibet to the center of the country. The early advance of Tibetan-speaking people westwards and southwards through the Himalayas and into what is now northern and central Nepal is also confirmed by the persistence in these areas of ancient dialects of Tibetan origin.*[4]

Tibetans in areas such as the Yarlung Valley did cultivate barley, and the eating of *tsampa*—roasted barley flour—became an important cultural identifier for Tibetans.

A seminal event in the early cultural development of Tibet was the emergence of the kings of Yarlung who, from before the beginning of the Common Era up to the 7th century, united the peoples of the plateau under a single central authority and overran regions beyond Tibet. The ability of the Yarlung kings to bring the whole plateau under one administration provided not only the material base for Tibet's cultural development but also the governance that strengthened the cohesion of the Tibetan people. It was during the Yarlung period that the indigenous Bon religion was formalized, and was ultimately supplanted—at least officially—by Buddhism. It was also during this time the Tibetan script was developed, beginning a rich literary tradition that would encompass not only the epic poem of *Ling Gesar* but also the launching of a massive multi-century effort to translate the Dharma into Tibetan.

The Yarlung kingdom emerged out of the fractious tribes who were moving across and settling on the Tibetan plateau in the 2nd and 3rd centuries BCE. According to Tibetan myth, the Yarlung kings descended from heaven by means of a rope called the *Mu* cord, and returned by the same means at the end of their lives, leaving no corpse. The early Yarlung King Grigum Tsanpo was the first to cut this cord and make the transition from mythic to mortal form—an event that also necessitated the development of funeral rites and appears to have precipitated the introduction of early Bon rituals.[5] Grigum's son and successor, Pude Gungyal, completed the transition from mythical to historical and united the three smaller kingdoms of Kongpo, Pobo and Nyang under the Yarlung banner. Tibetan lore ascribes to Pude Gungyal the characteristics of a founder of a nation: discovery of principle metals, introduction of agriculture and irrigation, building of the great castle of Yarlung, and adoption of the Bon religion.[6] By the fourth century, clans of Tibetans had formed a type of confederation built around fortresses and walled cities along the banks of the *Yarlung Tsangpo* or Brahmaputra River, established and scrupulously recorded elaborate Bon-influenced burial rites, and were both cultivating barley and practicing pastoral nomadism.[7]

In the early seventh century, the Yarlung King Tagbu Nyazig, also called Namri Songtsen, began a period of expansion that would result in the consolidation of all of central Tibet under Yarlung rule. The ability of the Yarlung king to manage these vastly expanded territories was heavily dependent on the loyalty of local clans. The feudal arrangement that resulted made it possible for the clan-based aristocracy to expand political power, while the alliances among them made it possible for the clans to project their combined power. This arrangement was similar to a nomadic confederation, whereby nomadic tribes would band together for the purpose of further conquest, but

it differed in that it was centered in an area of mixed economy with sedentary aspects that then expanded out to encompass neighboring nomadic tribes. This kind of 'hub-and-spokes' alliance arrangement would be familiar to modern military planners. The resulting state, with its combination of the strengths of the sedentary agricultural and nomadic economies and its suitability to the geography of central Tibet, formed the basis of a centralized Tibetan empire.

When Namri Songtsen died, his son Songtsen Gampo came to power. King Songtsen Gampo is considered the greatest of the Yarlung rulers and a central figure in Tibetan history. It was under Songtsen Gampo that Tibet was consolidated as a state and continued to expand into an empire that ranged from Nepal to Burma to the borders of Tang China, but he is most revered by Tibetans for having introduced Buddhism from India. A fierce and capable warrior, he famously married Nepalese and Chinese princesses for political reasons, and they ultimately influenced Songtsen to support the propagation of Buddhism under his patronage. He built the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, built the first palace where the Potala Palace is now located, and developed a legal code. He was also responsible for the development and promotion of a consolidated Tibetan script, which he initially used primarily to communicate with his generals. Following his death, the Yarlung kingdom was effectively ruled by a series of astute ministers who expanded the empire toward Turkestan in the north and as far west as Afghanistan, and competed with China and other major imperial powers of the day. In addition to frustrating imperial China with their military prowess—reaching the Tang capital at one point—and control of crucial trading routes, the Tibetans reportedly irritated the Tang court by treating them as their equals in diplomatic discourse and resisting various ploys designed to implicate the Tibetans in a tributary relationship.[8]

During the imperial period that began with Namri Songtsen and Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century and lasted for approximately 200 years, Tibet developed the characteristics that defined it as a nation: shared ethnicity, territory, culture, language and, ultimately, religion. The existing sense of common ethnicity among the federated tribes of the plateau strengthened into a more cohesive sense of identity, including as defined against distinctly foreign neighboring Chinese, Indic and Muslim dominated cultures. The development and propagation of a common Tibetan script and a standardized spoken language were essential elements of this consolidation of Tibetan cultural identity. Tibet incorporated intellectual and material culture from its neighbors, particularly India, Nepal and Central Asia, as well as China. Both the continued development of the Bon practices during this period and the absorption of the Buddhist canon were elemental in the creation of Tibetan cultural identity. While Buddhism remained largely an upper class religion because of its association with higher learning and advanced cultures, the aspirational seeds of its subsequent advancement in Tibet were laid at this critical time.

## Indigenous Religious Traditions

Tibet's earliest inhabitants practiced various forms of spirit worship and believed the whole of Tibet to be inhabited by malevolent demons and countless spirits dwelling within mountains, valleys and lakes. These animist beliefs eventually developed into the indigenous Bon religion that emerged in central Tibet, with significant influence from the Kingdom of Zhangzhung in the vicinity of *Gangkar Tise* or Mount Kailash. The cultural ideas and beliefs of Bon dominated the Yarlung Valley, home to the kings and emperors who laid the foundation of the Tibetan empire, and were widespread across the Tibetan plateau. The ritualistic forms developed by the Zhangzhung were integrated into the pre-Bon animist belief systems that were present among the tribes of central Tibet, who often are referred to as practicing proto-Bon forms of animism known as *Jol* or *Dur* Bon. The early manifestations of Bon have been described by some scholars as primarily consisting of "rituals for supporting an imperial cult [and] also included systems of divination, astrology, healing rituals to placate harmful spirits, and herbal medicine."[9]

The founder of the Bon tradition was Shenrab Miwoche, who was believed to have come from the area around Mount Kailash. Shenrab is often mentioned in the Gesar epic, and scholar David Snellgrove has postulated that he may have had some connection to the historical Buddha.[10]

In addition, early Tibetan contacts with Buddhism took place during the time when Bon and other animist religions were still dominant. Lha Thothori Nyentsen, the 28th Yarlung king, was recorded as receiving two Buddhist sutras from India. While these sutras were treated with great reverence, they remained a mystery because Tibetans had no comprehension of the Indic language in which the two sutras were written. Nonetheless, the sutras were regarded as precious objects, the *Nyenpo Sangwa* or Sacred Secret.

Throughout the Tibetan imperial period, the Bon religion remained an essential aspect of Tibetan culture and was practiced by most Tibetans for hundreds of years after the introduction of Buddhism by Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century. It competed vigorously with Buddhism for official patronage, with strong elements of support within the aristocracy, and Bon rites remained an element of statecraft well past the time when Buddhism was made the state religion. During the second spread of Buddhism, the great Indian teacher Padmasambhava spent many years traveling across the plateau taming Bon spirits and turning them into spirit protectors of the Buddhadharma. They were thereby incorporated into Buddhism, even as they retained many of their essential features and associated rituals. One of the most prominent examples of this syncretic adaptation is the Nechung Oracle, the state oracle of Tibet, who was integrated into Buddhism when Padmasambhava tamed the local spirit protector during the consecration of the first major Tibetan monastery, Samye, and set him atop the hierarchy of spirit protectors of Tibetan Buddhism.[11] Although the Nechung Oracle was originally an institution of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, it evolved to become the protector of the Dalai Lamas (lamas of the Gelugpa school) who employed it in official decision-making as well as religious ritual. The 14th Dalai Lama still consults the Nechung Oracle on religious and other matters.

Given this blending of traditions, it is unsurprising that even some ardent Tibetan Buddhist practitioners continued to practice Bon rites and considered them important Tibetan 'customs.' The formalization of Bon over the centuries largely has brought it out of conflict with Buddhism, and Bon rites continue to be practiced by Tibetans up to the present in a form that is far more sophisticated than the primitive cult it is often portrayed to be. Its legacy also lives on in the sanctification of the physical world—the designation of mountains and forests as sacred—that remains a feature of Tibet's religious syncretism.

## Introduction of Buddhism

As the Tibetan state was consolidating into empire under the rule of Songtsen Gampo, he introduced a cultural force that was to have a profound impact on Tibetan society. The absorption of Buddhism into the spiritual and cultural life of Tibet enabled the Tibetan people to consistently produce a large number of Buddhist masters and scholars whose teachings and writings have enriched Tibetan civilization. The Tibetans established monasteries that became centers of learning that dominated spiritual and intellectual life in Tibet and beyond.

Out of the Tibetans' complete devotion to Buddhism and their single-minded pursuit of the Buddhist teachings emerged two important features that shaped the character of Tibetan civilization. The first was the emergence of the monasteries and the monastic education system. Monasteries not only dominated Tibetan intellectual and spiritual life but they became a political force to be reckoned with, collectively and individually. The monastic system served as a magnet for the best minds of Tibet, who consistently produced a vast amount of scholarly and spiritual work that built upon the Buddhist spiritual heritage.

The second feature was the incorporation of the Buddhist concept of reincarnation into a system that vested certain key reincarnate lamas or *tulkus* with residual ecclesiastical and later political authority. The development of the tulku system and the proliferation of reincarnate lamas created a vertically and horizontally integrated network of teachers and their students with profound spiritual and political implications for the Tibetan people. In particular, the tulku system, through the creation and perpetuation of intergenerational linkages for the transmission of spiritual knowledge and authority, became one of the most cherished and significant aspects of Tibetan cultural heritage, even as its conflation of religious and political authority ultimately contributed to weaknesses in the institutions of state.

Songtsen Gampo's style of empire-building relied not only on military prowess, but was also marked by a willingness to incorporate foreign ideas as a means to strengthen the cohesion of the Tibetan-speaking people and consolidate authority over conquered territory. His adoption of Buddhism and his development of a written script were examples of this practice, and in time they became mutually reinforcing elements in the development and spread of a syncretic Tibetan Buddhism that was rooted in India but shaped by indigenous Tibetan memes and open to engagement with Buddhist Chinese emperors. Songtsen Gampo was encouraged in his embrace of Buddhism by his Nepalese and Chinese queens, both devout Buddhists, who had each brought with them a statue of the Buddha, reportedly blessed by the Buddha himself, and constructed the temples of Jokhang and Ramoche to house these statues. Indian Buddhist masters welcomed the Tibetans to their temples and extended enormous cooperation to Tibetan scholars and students in their study and mastery of the languages and wisdom held in them.

After the invention of the Tibetan script, the Tibetans began a centuries-long translation effort that enabled them to introduce the whole body of Buddhist wisdom to Tibet. Indian, Nepalese and Chinese Buddhist masters were invited to Tibet to assist in the translation effort. Despite court resistance from a diverse coalition of Bon adherents and political challengers, the successors of Songtsen Gampo carried out his work of the study of Buddhism and translation of Buddhist texts.

Under imperial patronage, Buddhism became the official state religion of Tibet. Important monasteries were constructed and the first monks ordained. This was also the time the great Indian teacher Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) took up residence in Tibet. But despite this grand imperial proselytizing effort, there remained resistance to Buddhism within the court and beyond, and most average Tibetans did not initially embrace Buddhism but rather continued with local pre-Bon and Bon religious practices.

After the death of Trisong Detsen around 800 AD, there was dissention within the royal family and a period of rapid successions. Langdarma, a fervent Bon practitioner, took the throne after assassinating his brother King Ralpacan. Langdarma suppressed Buddhism with an iron-fist, causing Buddhist masters and scholars to flee to the east and northeast regions of Kham and Amdo. In 842, Langdarma was himself assassinated, reportedly by a monk. The resulting succession dispute, coupled with external military attacks, brought the collapse of central authority and an end to Tibetan imperial support for the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet. These events foreshadowed the degree to which Buddhism's role as a critical element of organization and power of the Tibetan state contributed to both its strength and its weakness.

Even as Buddhism was driven underground, the Tibetan people had started to become interested in the teachings of the Buddha. Tibet's dismemberment into smaller fiefdoms after the collapse of the Yarlung dynasty allowed local rulers to finance individual Tibetan scholars to travel to India in search of Buddhist knowledge. While Buddhism was being persecuted in central Tibet, it grew more firmly established in Kham and Amdo and in far western Tibet. In particular, western Tibet was active in dispatching students to India to receive teachings and inviting Indian scholars to the country. Among them was another great Indian teacher, Atisha, who with his disciples made revisions to the Tibetan translations of Buddhist texts and gave teachings in western and central Tibet.

By the time Atisha arrived in the mid-11th century, Buddhism was resurgent and had spread beyond elite circles to genuinely compete with Bon for the attention of average Tibetans. This period became known as the second spread of Buddhism, and proved to be decisive. The thirst for military victory was transformed into a thirst for victory over the ego and the mind. The early efforts of the Tibetan scholars and translators to receive the Buddha's teachings enabled the succeeding generations to establish the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism based on slightly different interpretations of these teachings. These schools and the monasteries they spawned throughout Tibet, in the absence of a central authority, acquired immense prestige and ultimately paved the way for Buddhism to acquire political authority. The emergence of the four traditions of Buddhism energized Tibetan civilization and made Tibet a center of learning for High Asia.

## The Four Schools of Tibetan Buddhism

The Nyingma is Tibetan Buddhism's oldest school. It traces its lineage to the primordial Buddha, Samantabhadra, through Padmasambhava and other great masters. One of the important features of the Nyingma tradition is the *terma*, hidden spiritual treasure. These were hidden by Padmasambhava in both physical and mental space, and he predicted his disciples would reincarnate to reveal these treasures for the benefit of all beings. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* is credited as one such treasure. Those who find these treasures are called *Tertons* or treasure masters. The Nyingma school produced many great spiritual luminaries who compiled the teachings of *Dzogchen* or the great completion, the ultimate teachings of the Tantras (Vajrayana Buddhist scriptures) on the nature of mind and phenomenon.

The Kagyu school traces its lineage to the Indian saint Naropa and his Tibetan disciples Marpa, the great Tibetan translator, and Milarepa, the poet-saint of Tibet. The Kagyu tradition eventually grew into four major and eight minor lineages. When the great Kagyu master Karmapa Dusum Khyenpa (1110–1193) passed away his reincarnation was discovered and duly recognized. Soon other schools adopted the practice of reincarnation. From 1434 to 1642, the Karma Kagyu school, one of the four major lineages, was heavily involved in politics and predominant in Tibet.

The Sakya school originated in the 11th century, and was closely connected with the Indian saint Padmasambhava through one of the 'holy' families of Tibet, the Khon family. The Sakya school became a preeminent spiritual center as well as an influential political power in Tibet from the 11th to mid-14th centuries. The Sakya were the architects of the first priest-patron or *choyon* relationship between Tibetan religious leaders and Mongol rulers of the Yuan dynasty.

The Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism was founded by Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) and traces its lineage back to the Kadampa order established by disciples of the Indian saint Atisha. Tsongkhapa was attracted to the Kadam emphasis on Mahayana principles of universal compassion and altruism, valuing these qualities not only as a spiritual orientation, but also as a way of life. The Gelug school combined this approach with a strong emphasis on insight into the doctrine of emptiness—one of the most challenging concepts in Buddhism. The 1st Dalai Lama, Gedun Drub (1391–1474), emerged from this tradition, as did the Panchen Lamas. In 1642, the Great 5th Dalai Lama assumed political authority of all Tibet, marking the triumph of the Gelug school and its continued association with political leadership of Tibet.

## Monastic Education System and Its Impact

An important characteristic of the second spread of Buddhism in Tibet was the profusion of great monasteries. The emergence of monasteries and advanced monastic educational institutions throughout Tibet during the second propagation of Buddhism had two lasting consequences: their contributions to the cultural unity of the Tibetan people through the dissemination of the Buddhadharma and as centers of cultural life; and their role as storehouses of learning that preserved and advanced Tibetan Buddhist civilization, generation after generation.

Monasteries played a key role in cementing the Tibetan people together as one culture in a politically disorganized Tibet. The principal spiritual seats of all the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism were in central Tibet. These seats appointed the abbots and reconfirmed the incarnate lamas

of their branch monasteries throughout the plateau, thus investing central Tibet with high levels of spiritual authority. The great monasteries and temples of the Tibetan capital at Lhasa became the ultimate destination of pilgrims and scholars alike, which further contributed to the spiritual and cultural cohesion of the Tibetan people. By the 11–12th century, Buddhist texts were studied in the common Tibetan script throughout Tibet, reinforcing cultural unity. In this way, the monasteries served as a unifying force that overcame divergent backgrounds and institutions.

The monastic educational system's use of the Tibetan language as common medium of instruction contributed to the Tibetan people's linguistic unity. Commentaries on Buddhism by one scholar at a particular monastery could be dispersed throughout Tibet for study and further commentary. Scholars from all over Tibet journeyed to central Tibet to complete their higher studies at the principal seats of their tradition. Tibetan monasteries were based on the model of Indian Buddhist universities. The presence of the Indian masters Santaraksita and Padmasambhava at the ordination of the first Tibetan Buddhist monks is symbolic of the centrality of Indian Buddhism and the north Indian monastic model to the development of Tibetan culture. These monastic universities taught philosophy and logic, as well as astronomy, medicine, ritual and liturgy, grammar and poetry and, in time, became the production centers and repositories of a wide range of creative arts, including painting, sculpture, metallurgy, embroidery, music, and dance.

Tibetan scholars immersed themselves in this culture and the knowledge it provided. By the 12th century, Tibetan students and translators had managed to transfer into Tibetan vernacular the entirety of the Dharmic texts and absorb from Indian teachers the manner of addressing, analyzing and commenting on them. This complete translation of Buddhism into the Tibetan language made it possible for later Tibetan scholars and masters to study and pass on Buddhism to their students without any knowledge of Sanskrit or other Indian languages.

As important as the texts themselves were, the tradition of oral commentary, memorization and debate were also critical. The strong element of reliance on oral transmission made it possible for this knowledge to be passed along prior to the development of systematic woodblock printing or widespread literacy in the Tibetan text. The translated texts themselves were terse, dense works that were meant to be read with substantial oral supplementary material, i.e. the teachings of masters who had studied them and knew the history of commentaries handed down over generations. Texts on logic, cosmology, epistemology, ethics, and the path to enlightenment were approached through the dual paths of memorization and debate. It was not uncommon for a scholar who had completed *geshe larampha* studies (the most advanced level of scholarship in the Gelugpa school) to memorize several thousands of texts and their accompanying commentaries after an average of 20 years of intense study. Having committed the curriculum to memory, the monks would then engage in a highly structured but spirited debate on the finer points of the text and commentary, using logic and knowledge of the Dharma to reveal additional layers of wisdom. The best scholars would stay on at the monasteries as teachers and ensure that the debate advanced as they continually challenged one another.

These monastic teachers then became the primary educators of Tibetan male society. Because of the heavy emphasis on scholarship, monastic education had something of a democratizing effect on Tibetan society. A monk from the hinterlands—the son of a nomad or farmer—could, through study of the Dharma, become a leading member of Tibetan society. At the height of the Lamaist state in the late 1800s–early 1900s, approximately 25 percent of the Tibetan male population was comprised of monks, and there were more than 20,000 monks in Lhasa, a city of 60,000. The three great monasteries of Lhasa—Drepung, Sera and Ganden—were among the largest in the world, and drew students from all over ethnographic Tibet as well as farther reaches that had been touched by Tibetan Buddhism or sought out its wisdom. This traffic of ideas and scholars between central Tibet and the frontiers contributed to Tibet's cultural and spiritual wholeness, even as Tibet experienced political upheaval that frequently involved the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

## Reincarnation

When Karmapa Pakshi was recognized in the 12th century as the reincarnation of the Karmapa Dusum Khyenpa, he became the first recognized incarnate lama in Tibetan history. This idea of recognizing reincarnate lamas was quickly embraced by the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism as a means of smoothing leadership succession and developing inspirational spiritual leadership. When the Buddhist *sangha*, or monastic community, emerged as the political as well as spiritual leaders of Tibet, particularly under the rule of the Dalai Lamas, the implementation of esoteric religious practice took on broader and more profound implications for Tibetan society.

The concept of reincarnation came from the Indian masters, but it was also consistent with the pre-Buddhist Tibetan traditions that believed spirits inhabited the world and the body but did not cease to exist at death. Within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, a complex theology exists around the idea of reincarnation. For most believers, the cycle of life, death and rebirth is a chaotic process in which their consciousness is buffeted by karmic forces over which they have little or no control, other than through the accrual of *karma* during past lives. An accomplished meditation master or other highly realized practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism, however, is able to keep his mindstream or consciousness calm during this tumult and control the process.

When such a being, out of compassion for his fellow sentient beings and a sincere desire to relieve their suffering, chooses to return to human form and the realm of suffering rather than move on toward enlightenment, such a reincarnation becomes a tulku (often referred to by the honorific *rinpoche*, meaning 'precious one'). The finding and recognition of reincarnate tulkus is accomplished by their co-religionists through a process of ritual, divination and testing of candidates, often relying on statements and clues left behind by the departed lineage holder and the recognition of objects that belonged to him. An important innovation of the Karma Kagyu was to determine that the reincarnate tulku could inherit the worldly goods and obligations of its predecessor. The widespread adoption of this belief precipitated the accrual of tremendous influence within Tibetan monasteries.

During the interregnum between the fall of the Tibetan empire and the Mongol incursions of Tibet in 1247, there was no central political authority in Tibet. By the beginning of the 13th century, Buddhist schools had emerged as the dominant economic, political and spiritual authority throughout Tibet, but no one school was strong enough to dominate the others. At the turn of the 14th century, Tsongkhapa established the Gelug school in this environment of a spiritually productive but politically bereft Tibet. The Gelug school vigorously embraced reincarnation as a means of transferring spiritual authority. After the passing away of Tsongkhapa's disciple Gedun Drub, the Gelugs recognized Gedun Gyatso as his reincarnation. Gedun Drub and Gedun Gyatso were posthumously designated as the 1st and 2nd Dalai Lamas after Gedun Gyatso's reincarnation, Sonam Gyatso, was given that title by the Mongol emperor Altan Khan.

Sonam Gyatso launched the Gelug lineage on the path to assume spiritual and political authority of all Tibet when he set off from Lhasa in 1577 to conduct Buddhist rites at the Altan Khan's court. He returned home with the title *Dalai Lama* or 'ocean of wisdom.' The Gelug school did not achieve dominance in central Tibet until the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso. In 1642 a resurgent Mongol empire under Gushri Khan offered the 5th Dalai Lama supreme political and spiritual authority over the territory from the borders with Ladakh in the west to Dartsedo in the east. The Gushri Khan's intervention on behalf of the Gelugpa settled regional and sectarian conflicts in Tibet, but only through the application of Mongol political and military authority. The ascension of the Gelugpa, who practiced a relatively orthodox form of monasticism despite their relatively recent arrival on the scene, meant further marginalization of shamanistic traditions. The Gelug enthusiasm for the system of passing authority via reincarnation also marked the beginning of a reincarnation-based monastic political dynasty that would effectively rule the Tibetan state until the Chinese Communist invasion of 1949. This conflation of religious and political leadership ensured that what had previously been an esoteric religious process of selecting reincarnate lamas would now become—particularly in the case of those lineages that wielded enormous power and controlled influential monasteries—intensely politicized.

Despite reincarnation's theological and traditional origins, the vesting of political authority in tulkus led some scholars to conclude that the type of reincarnation-based succession system that developed in Tibet came about for expressly political reasons.[12] Whatever its origins, it is indisputable that reliance on such a system of reincarnation for societal leadership led to profound cultural and political implications for Tibetans. Beyond the senior leadership of the state, the system of reincarnation developed as the primary means of identifying the successors to scriptural lineages. The profusion of rinpoches and reincarnate lamas across Tibetan Buddhism remains one of its primary and most distinguishing features. By the early 20th century, there were believed to have been more than two thousand recognized tulku*s* in Tibet, all of whom maintained both a loyal local following and links through their monastic traditions to a vast network of scholars and other practitioners.

In addition to their traditional role in Tibetan society as community and religious leaders, reincarnate lamas grew to have a particular role in the inter-generational transmission of spiritual knowledge. The teachings, empowerments and rituals associated with a lama were best received from the lineage holder, or someone who had received them from the lineage holder, in order to ensure the unbroken line of transmission from the original source. Because of the relationship between these important teachers and texts they were associated with, scholar monks would traverse the plateau to receive particular empowerments and teachings from the lineage holder responsible for maintaining them. In this fashion, lamas themselves became part of the fabric of the Dharma for Tibetan Buddhists, and they remain essential elements in its correct and full transmission up to the present.

For the Tibetan laity, local rinpoches were often their landlords and spiritual masters. The monastic houses sometimes exploited this conflated relationship, but it also ensured the diffusion of Buddhism down to the lowest levels of society. The first western contacts with Tibetans in the 19th century reported that even the most humble farmer could be seen reciting the *Om mani padme hum* mantra while spinning prayer wheels, doing prostrations and circumambulating holy sites. At the same time, both the hierarchical nature of the various schools, and the conjoined political and religious authority of monastic institutions in Lhasa allowed certain religious figures to develop sectarian and even national followings among the laity. It was through this process that Tibetan Buddhists from various traditions came to revere the Dalai Lama and accept his primacy as both a spiritual master and a political ruler.

Under the rule of the 5th Dalai Lama, Lhasa truly became the capital of a theocratic Tibetan state. He named a government (*Ganden Phodrang*) and held court at Drepung Monastery while he began construction of the Potala Palace. He issued laws of public conduct, appointed governors to different districts and a council of ministers to run the new government. The government conducted a census of the population and collected taxes, including from far-flung areas in eastern Tibet. While the Dalai Lamas continued to face challenges from other schools, as well as external threats, they and their fellow Gelugpas sat atop the Tibetan hierarchy for most of the next three hundred years. As 'reformers' who were trying to purify Tibetan Buddhism, they set about attempting to create a "perfect environment for the practice of Tibetan Buddhism in general and for the Gelugpa sect in particular."[13] This included establishing the optimal size for monasteries, giving monasteries the right to conscript children to maintain their numbers, and subsidizing commodities and ritual ceremonies of the monasteries.

The deep devotion of the Mongol rulers to the Dalai Lamas revitalized the dynamics of the priest-patron relationship. This devotional relationship prompted the Manchu Qing emperor Shunzhi to invite the Dalai Lama to Beijing, in the hopes he could be persuaded to use his spiritual authority with the Mongols to deter them from encroaching upon Manchu China. This led to the establishment of a type of choyon relationship between the Dalai Lamas and the early Manchu emperors. Reincarnation was a critical element of the perpetuation of the choyon relationship with the hereditary Mongol and Manchu courts.

While the reincarnation-based system of ecclesiastical rule created internal cultural and political unity and gave Tibetan leaders a role in inner Asian affairs, it also contained elements of instability. The period of interregnum that occurred after a Dalai Lama (or other important religious

figure) died and his reincarnation had not yet been identified or reached the age of majority was an inherently challenging time. Tibetan power brokers rarely failed to seize the opportunities for manipulation and mischief that arose when such leadership vacuums occurred, and external actors often attempted to insert themselves at critical moments. The danger of foreign adventurism in reincarnation processes was magnified by the fact that the lamaist state was often dependent on various foreign political patrons for external protection and, at times, internal authority. The societal decision to devote the resources of the state to monastic and spiritual pursuits, rather than military ones, meant that Tibet was often vulnerable to the powers on its periphery or even farther afield. Nonetheless, the eventual creation of mixed political institutions with secular and ecclesiastical membership and actual governing authority, such as the *Kashag* (cabinet of ministers) and *Tsongdu* (National Assembly), that operated alongside the Dalai Lama's rule served to provide some means of managing Tibetan affairs through periods of discontinuity at the top.

Aside from the novel aspect of drawing from both the lay aristocracy and sangha, the government's bureaucratic structure was straightforward: departments had clearly delineated areas of responsibility; recruitment was based on qualifications measured by exams; promotion was theoretically based on ability; there was extensive use of written records; and a disciplinary system was in place.[14] The Kashag was the administrative center of the government. While it lacked authority over the monastic institutions, it was still considerably powerful by virtue of its position as the gatekeeper to the Dalai Lama with regard to all secular matters of state and as the holder of all the records of the bureaucracy. The National Assembly emerged in the 1860s, when a group of aristocrats, government officials, and leaders from the Ganden and Drepung Monasteries convened as part of a power struggle over the Dalai Lama's regency. In the modern era (1913–1951), assemblies met irregularly at the request of the Kashag in response to specific issues as directed by it.[15]

This theocratic system reached its apogee under the 13th Dalai Lama, particularly the last two decades of his life—which coincided with the period of Tibet's assertion of total independence from China. Between the reign of the 5th and the 13th Dalai Lamas, Tibet had a series of rather unremarkable and short-lived rulers who were largely figureheads of a government managed by the Kashag, various regents, the aristocracy and other powerful secular and monastic interests.[16] The 13th Dalai Lama, however, was the dominant figure in Tibetan politics from the time he took control of the government in 1895 until his death in 1933.

Following the chaotic rules of the 6th and 7th Dalai Lamas, the Manchu empire sought greater control over Tibetan affairs in order to address ongoing raids into China by Tibetan bandits and warlords from the frontier areas. This involved the appointment of *ambans* (Manchu imperial governors) in Lhasa and the garrisoning of Manchu troops in the city. It was during this time, in 1793, that the Manchu emperor established the controversial golden urn methodology for selecting the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and other high lamas. By the mid-1800s, however, the weakened Qing dynasty could not effectively assert a role in Tibetan political affairs. Tibetan monastic and aristocratic leadership ruled Tibet with minimal interference from the Qing court.

In the early years of the 20th century, the impending dissolution of the Qing empire and subsequent rise of Republican China, together with interventions into Tibet by Russia and Britain, pushed Tibet further into uncharted political territory. By that time, the 13th Dalai Lama had taken the throne, but Tibet itself was militarily weak and had used the Qing's protective umbrella in keeping out foreign interests for over a century. With the Qing court no longer able to shield it, Tibet was forced to confront these eager foreign interests on its own.

In 1904, amid growing concerns about Russian interests in Tibet and after years of fruitless negotiations to expand Tibetan trade concessions with British territories in northern India, Colonel Francis Younghusband led British expeditionary forces into Tibet—killing nearly 1,000 poorly armed Tibetan soldiers in the process. By the time Younghusband reached Lhasa, the Dalai Lama had fled. The British intervention resulted in the Qing, weakened as they were, making a concerted effort to restore their position in Tibet. Through skillful diplomacy, they were able to do so in the international legal sense. By closing off alternative sources of patronage and through effective local coercion,

they were able to reassert effective political control over the Lhasa administration by 1909. It was short lived, however, as the Qing dynasty collapsed in the wake of the October 1911 Chinese Revolution. By January 1913, all Chinese troops had been expelled from central Tibet, the Dalai Lama had returned to Lhasa from exile in India, and Tibet declared formal independence from China. Central Tibet was free of Chinese authority, notwithstanding unenforceable Republican pronouncements to the contrary, and would remain so until the 1949 Communist invasion.

The 13th Dalai Lama, having been twice exiled due to the machinations of geopolitics and China's desire to control Tibetan territory, set about attempting to modernize the Tibetan state. In addition to attempting to regain lost territory in eastern Tibet, he attempted to modernize the educational system and the Tibetan army with British assistance, and emphasized Tibet's orientation toward India and its co-religionists in Mongolia. Internally, the 13th Dalai Lama was required to use all his political skills to manage increasingly fractious Tibetan politics. The growing power of the Tibetan military, the influential presence of the British and other political factors were stressing relations among the *sangha* or monastic communities, the political elite and the Dalai Lama.[17] In the end, this conflict forced the Dalai Lama to retreat from his efforts at modernization.

The period following the death of the 13th Dalai Lama in December 1933 was characterized by a focus on internal political intrigues, which "consumed the vitality of the political and monastic elite."[18] It was a time of struggle between the forces of change and those of conservatism. The Dalai Lama's reincarnation was identified in far eastern Tibet in 1938. Political maneuvering—and the young Dalai Lama's training—during the interregnum completely absorbed the monastic and political elite at a time when global events would soon threaten Tibet's *de facto* independence. There was another attempt at modernization in the late 1930s and early 1940s, but these efforts again foundered amid resistance from conservative monastic elements, and a vicious internal power struggle.

When China's Peoples Liberation Army attacked eastern Tibet in 1949, Lhasa was again belatedly attempting to modernize its military and bureaucratic structures. All the while, the young Dalai Lama and his regency were dealing with a political elite riven with internal conflict—including the presence of Tibetans who had been cultivated by the Chinese Communist Party.

## Influence of Tibetan Culture beyond Tibet

Just as Tibetan students had eagerly learned from their committed and generous Indian masters, so too were Mongol and other students keen to study with Tibetan teachers. Just as the earlier Tibetan empire had expanded its reach through conquest around its periphery, Tibetan Buddhist civilization made its way beyond Tibet to Bhutan, Sikkim, China and the whole northern Himalayan belt of Nepal. In addition to Mongolia, Tibetan Buddhism was adopted in areas of present day Russia (Kalmykia, Buryatia and Tuva). People from this inner Asian landmass looked to Tibet as the center of higher learning and the wellspring of their culture and spirituality. The diffusion of Tibetan Buddhism was greatly facilitated when the Tibetans introduced wooden block printing presses in Narthang and Lhasa in central Tibet, Derge in Kham and Jone in Amdo. Scriptural texts authored by Tibetan scholars and printed at one of Tibet's three printing presses made their way to monasteries and temples everywhere touched by the Tibetan Buddhist civilization.

## Tibetan Language

The origins of the Tibetan language are still debated by scholars. Linguists generally assign the Tibetan language to the Tibeto-Burman group of languages.[19] Some scholars believe that Tibetan borrows heavily from the Zhangzhung language, developed by one of the pre-Tibetan tribes found on the plateau. Variations of the Tibetan language are spoken in many pockets of the Himalayan region from Ladakh in the west, Arunachal Pradesh in the east and along the Sino-Tibetan borderlands inhabited previously by Ch'iang, Moso or Naxi and the ancient Tanguts or the Xi Xia people.

Tibetan language as a tool of communication over this huge landmass was strengthened when in the 7th century Thomi Sambhota invented the written script based on the Indian Gupta and Brahmi alphabets. The common written script of the Tibetan language enabled the Tibetan people to access the whole body of the wisdom of Buddhist India. The script also enabled the Tibetans to store and leave for posterity non-Buddhist knowledge and sciences emanating from their own and other cultural realms. Above all, the script reinforced the basic cultural unity and common identity of the Tibetan people.

R.A. Stein, the author of *Tibetan Civilization*, describes the efforts made by the Tibetan people to put the script into use as "prodigious," describing Tibetan literature as "absolutely vast, and we are far from having a complete inventory of it." Stein notes that:

> *[Tibet's prolific scholars] very soon produced a large number of original treatises on philosophy… historical works, textbooks of grammar and prosody, dictionaries-Sanskrit-Tibetan, or vocabularies of technical terms and old words-treatises on chronological computation, astrology, divination and medicine, bibliographies, geographical descriptions and pilgrims' guides, accounts of travel—real or mystical—treatises on the art of government and on various techniques (agriculture, making of statues, china, tea, etc.).*

The Tibetan script was also essential in capturing the folk literature of pre-literate Tibet and literature produced within the Bon tradition, including the oral literary tradition of folk stories like the *Gesar Ling*, reportedly the longest epic in the world, comparable to Homer's *Iliad* or the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* of India.

## Tibetan Scientific Thought

As Buddhism took root in Tibet, it contributed to the development of other aspects of Tibetan culture, particularly the sciences and arts. The Buddhist treatises on the five major (internal science or Buddhist philosophy, logic and epistemology, grammar, medicine, and arts and crafts) and five minor sciences (poetics, metrics, lexicography, theater, and astrology)[20] informed and served as an impetus for those Tibetans specializing in the fields of human endeavor and knowledge.

Buddhism had a particularly important impact on the development and evolution of the Tibetan medical system. There existed a native Tibetan/Bon medical system before the introduction of Buddhism. According to Bon legend, Shenrab Miwoche revealed medical texts and teachings to his son and eight sages. With the importation of Buddhism from India, Tibetans overlaid their existing local medical knowledge—including the use of the particular flora and fauna of the Tibetan plateau—with the traditional Buddhist medical arts. The resulting system was a unique and complex hybrid that remains influential across Asia. The first international conference on medicine in Tibet was held during the reign of King Trisong Detsen (730–785 AD). Physicians from India, China, Persia, Nepal and Central Asia attended. Today, Tibetan medicine remains an important part of Tibetan culture and is still expanding through the development of new diagnostic and treatment tools. Scientists are also studying it to better understand its properties and potential applications.

The distinctive linguistic, scientific, and religious heritage described above indicates a highly developed and unique Tibetan culture had taken root long before the Chinese Communists laid claim to Tibetans as a national minority. The proceeding sections will go into greater detail explaining how the Chinese government has gone about dismantling and destroying the highly developed Tibetan culture described above.

[1] Warren Smith, *Tibetan Nation*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996); Map 1, pp. 5–8.

[2] Bing Su, et. al., "Y chromosome haplotypes reveal prehistorical migrations to the Himalayas," *Human Genetics*, 2000; pp. 587–589.

[3] Bing, p. 588.

[4] Hugh Richardson and David Snellgrove, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, (Bloomington, IN; Shambhala, 1986), (1968); pp. 21–22.

[5] Warren Smith, *China's Tibet? Autonomy or Assimilation*, (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008) pp. 38–40.

[6] Smith, *China's Tibet?*, p. 41.

[7] Patrick French, *Tibet Tibet*, (New Delhi, India: HarperCollins, 2003), p. 90.

[8] See e.g. S. W. Bushell, "The Early History of Tibet. From Chinese Sources." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XII, 1880, p. 460.

[9] Alexander Berzin, "The History of the Early Period of Buddhism and Bon in Tibet," from unpublished manuscript *The Historical Interaction between the Buddhist and Islamic Cultures before the Mongol Empire* (1996); at: *http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/study/history_buddhism/buddhism_tibet/details_tibetan_history/history_early_period_buddhism_tibet/Part_1.html*.

[10] David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, (Boston: Shambala, 1987), p. 390.

[11] For more on this subject, see Ellen Pearlman, *Tibetan Sacred Dance: a journey into the religious and folk traditions*, (Rochester, Vermont, USA: Inner Traditions, 2002).

[12] Melvyn Goldstein's works, such as *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951: the Demise of the Lamaist State* (1989), explore the intensely political and pragmatic nature of the rule of the Dalai Lamas, including how they rose to power through alliances with powerful military figures and their competition with other schools. Tom Grunfield, in *The Making of Modern Tibet*, also argues that the Gelugpa school made conscious political choices regarding its adoption of reincarnation practices (see pp. 40–47).

[13] Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, p. 2.

[14] Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, p. 10.

[15] Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, p. 19.

[16] The 6th Dalai Lama (1683–1706) was a dissolute individual who largely rejected his religious calling and was ultimately deposed and exiled. The 7th Dalai Lama (1708–1757) was exiled to China mid-way through his reign by the Manchu emperor. The 8th Dalai Lama (1758–1804) either allowed or was forced to hand over control of state affairs to a lay minister. The 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th Dalai Lamas all died at relatively young ages, and with strong evidence that their deaths were not natural. See Smith, *Tibetan Nation*, pp. 117–149 for a more extensive discussion of this period.

[17] Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, pp. 89–138.

[18] Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, p. 142.

[19] A conference Columbia University in New York in December 2011 brought together more than 70 linguists and scholars from China, India and the West to discuss the Tibetan language (papers available at: *http://www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/events/speciallectures/tibetan_language_conference.html*).

[20] Georges Dreyfus, *The sound of two hands clapping: the education of a Tibetan Buddhist monk*, (University of California Press, 2003), pp. 101–102.



# PRINCIPLES AND STRUCTURES OF CHINESE COMMUNIST RULE IN TIBET

This section will examine how the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) invasion of Tibet, starting in 1949 and continuing through 1950, launched an era of radical change not only in the political fortunes of the Tibetan state but also for Tibetan culture. The subsequent imposition of direct Chinese rule, combined with the application of Maoist political theories to Tibetan society, produced unprecedented social upheaval and cultural destruction for Tibetans. While the tactics of PRC rule in Tibet have varied over time, the PRC's policy framework and core attitudes towards Tibet and Tibetans have remained remarkably consistent to the nationalist and ideological roots of Mao Zedong's original ideas. The PRC's resulting policy failures in Tibet and the consequent years of misrule and harm to the Tibetan people are attributable to the PRC's original disregard for the Tibetan cultural context and its application of economic and political theories that strongly contradict Tibetan cultural values. The Chinese government's attitude toward Tibetans' religious practices has been especially problematic and remains a major cause of ongoing resistance to Chinese rule in Tibet.

In contrast to its ideological rigidity in Tibet, the Chinese party-state has been tactically flexible while pursuing the objectives of both rapid economic modernization through Tibet's integration into the Chinese economy, and social modernization through forced assimilation of Tibetans into the party-state's cultural values. After initial disastrous efforts to obliterate Tibetan culture in the early decades of Communist rule, PRC authorities have shifted to appropriating and co-opting Tibetan culture in the service of the party-state's policy objectives and as a tool of control where possible. This approach has limits, however, and where co-opting has failed to secure cooperation from Tibetans, the party-state has not hesitated to revert to more direct and repressive means. The more subtle approach of appropriating and co-opting—coupled with a massive top-down, state-led economic development program that disproportionately benefits the Chinese state and non-Tibetans who have flooded into Tibet—has led to severe cultural dislocation. And like the earlier blunt-force tactics, more recent approaches have utterly failed to eradicate the Tibetans' fundamental desire to control and express their culture and national identity.

While it is difficult to definitively establish the intent of the Chinese party-state, consequences indicate that its policies were established and executed in such a way that wholesale cultural destruction in Tibet was predictable and likely. This section will show that the Chinese party-state has acted intentionally in its treatment of the Tibetans, including in the abrogation of their cultural rights, and that present circumstances are raising the likelihood that acts of cultural genocide will continue to be committed.

From the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 to the present day, the Chinese Communists have characterized their invasion and occupation of Tibet as a 'liberation' of the Tibetan people from their feudal monastic overlords and from imperialist meddlers who tried to 'split' Tibet from its place within the Chinese state. After 'liberation' and as a continuance of its political mythmaking in Tibet, the PRC found it necessary to define pre-1949 Tibet as a "dark and hellish" [1] place under the rule of backward and rapacious lamas (which was, nonetheless, an inalienable part of China since time immemorial). For more than six decades, China has taken this 'liberation' narrative as the starting point for a set of policies intentionally designed to bring about a radical transformation of Tibetan society's political, social, cultural and economic pillars. While the techniques used and the intensity of their application have varied over time, there is a distinct continuity in overall approach that relates to the historical grievance narratives and political imperatives of the Chinese Communist Party's state building project, particularly its overriding need to retain legitimacy through means other than the electoral consent of the governed.

## Ideological and Nationalist Roots

> *The Communist Party is like the parent to the Tibetan people, and it is always considerate about what the children need… The Central Party Committee is the real living Buddha for Tibetans.*
>
> —*Zhang Qingli,*
> *Communist Party Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region (2006-2011),*
> *Xinhua, March 2, 2007*

> *The imagination and spiritual strength of Shakespeare's evildoers stopped short at a dozen corpses. Because they had no ideology.*
>
> —*Alexander Solzhenitsyn,*
> *The Gulag Archipelago*

Much has changed in China and Tibet since the founding of the People's Republic. The fruits of China's state capitalism have largely supplanted Mao's drab totalitarian utopianism (punctuated by the occasional murderous political campaign). Yet in Tibet, behind the gleaming façade of a modern Chinese economy, the ideological foundations of the party-state's policy approach remain fundamentally consistent with its original intent. True to Mao's ideas, today's policies toward Tibet are rooted in a toxic combination of Chinese chauvinism and Marxist dialectic that is elementally opposed to the Tibetan culture and identity. The tactics used and the severity of their application have been adjusted on occasion, but the basic premise of Chinese policy in Tibet remains the assimilation of Tibetans into the Chinese state, on Beijing's terms, to ensure control and material benefit flow to the Communist Party. Under this rubric, unregulated expressions of Tibetan identity are viewed as seditious, motivated by outside loyalties, specifically to the Dalai Lama, and therefore viewed as a threat to CCP authority.

Communist Chinese policies in Tibet were heavily influenced by two ideas that profoundly shaped modern China: Chinese nationalism and Marxist economic determinism.[2] Mao's particular brand of Chinese nationalism, which he shared with the Nationalist leader Sun Yat-Sen, was rooted in a victimhood narrative of a reconstituted China 'standing up' after two hundred years of humiliation at the hands of imperial powers who had broken China into pieces. This nationalist vision placed Tibet within the Chinese state by virtue of the fact it had been 'part of' the Qing and other ostensibly 'Chinese' empires, conveniently ignoring not only the fact that Tibet had been at least *de facto* independent[3] since the collapse of the Qing imperial rule in China in 1911 and for long periods before that, but also that the Qing empire itself was a Manchu one that derived its greatness by conquest. The fact that China was conquered and made an integral part of that empire and that Tibet was, in certain periods, a dependency of the Manchu empire, was a particularly weak basis for the Chinese nationalist proposition that Tibet was therefore historically a part of the Chinese state.

Nonetheless, assimilation of Tibet and other regions bordering on China into the Chinese state was an important policy aspiration of the Chinese Nationalist Party or *Kuomintang* (KMT) in the early 20th century. The KMT approach reflected a belief that the previous failure to assimilate Tibetans and other peoples on China's borders was due to: their mistreatment by imperial authorities; their own barbarism and ignorance of the Chinese civilization; and/or foreign efforts to stir up trouble where it did not naturally exist. Lacking the military or political authority to enforce their vision, the Republic of China government was forced to rely on various ideological and persuasive means of bringing the 'wayward' parts of the disintegrated Qing Empire under its sway. Tibetologist Gray Tuttle has argued that the KMT strategy relied on a three-pronged ideological appeal: racial unity, Chinese nationalism, and unity via pan-Asian Buddhism.[4] Sun Yat-sen's racialist theory, which the Republican government enshrined as state policy, defined the non-Chinese peoples of inner Asia as 'Chinese' in a national sense, with the Chinese state as a new nation with five constituent races derived from the Qing: Han, Mongol, Manchu, Tibetans and Tartar (Uyghurs).[5] This racialist discourse was intended in part to convince the Tibetans and other peoples on China's borders that their interests would be well represented within a unitary Chinese state. While emphasizing their goal of racial equality, the Nationalists defined self-determination as the right of China to be free from foreign imperialist interference, and they dismissed the notion that its constituent peoples had a freestanding right to independent statehood.

The reality of the Tibetans' experience with the Chinese Republican government—both the political domination of Chinese interests writ large and its inability to forestall the Tibetans' military domination by Chinese and Muslim warlords in the frontier areas—exposed the untruth of the racial equality rhetoric. Some Tibetan Buddhist leaders, such as the Panchen Lama, did enter into alliances with the Nationalist government, but these arrangements were driven largely by Tibetan desires to resist the centralization effort of the Tibetan government in Lhasa. Chinese Republican ideas failed to gain traction with most Tibetans, and the inability of the governments under Sun or his successor Chiang Kai-shek to assert anything like actual control over the Tibetan people and territories beyond the frontier limited the immediate impact of these policies.

The Chinese who formed the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) were not overly concerned with minority issues at first, but they did adopt the essence of Sun Yat-sen's nationalist doctrines. These ideas were further developed through the application of Marxist-Leninist theories and the early Soviet experiences with minorities and self-determination, as well as their own negative experiences dealing with non-Han peoples during the Long March. Because Marxist logic prescribed that the Chinese dictatorship of the proletariat could not be an imperial power, the CCP initially appeared to embrace the idea of self-determination for the Tibetan, Mongol, Manchu and Uighur peoples. The 1931 Communist Constitution, convened by the First All-China Soviet Congress, proclaimed certain rights for "the toiling masses of China" including for national minorities "their right to complete separation from China, and to the formation an independent state."[6]

By 1935, however, the Communists had backtracked. While they promised 'minority nationalities' a right to self-determination to convince them to side with the CCP during China's civil war, these promises were worded carefully so that ultimately they provided only a limited right to self-determination *within* the PRC. While Mao—like Marx and Lenin —believed that minority nationalism was fundamentally a class problem that would disappear with the full realization of socialism, he was not taking any chances. When the Communists defeated the Kuomintang forces and seized power in 1949 and subsequently 'liberated' Tibet in 1950, they declared that the liberation of the Chinese people and the self-determination of the 'minority nationalities' had been achieved and their struggle with the foreign imperialists was over.

Ultimately, Mao and his colleagues held the same chauvinist attitudes toward the Tibetans as had the early KMT. As the Tibet scholar Dr. Warren Smith notes: "CCP nationalities policy combined traditional Chinese frontier assimilationism with an ideology that promised to grant autonomy to minority nationalities. This was based upon the Marxist-Leninist theory that…autonomy could be employed to facilitate the ultimate goal of assimilation."[7] While Chinese leaders from Mao Zedong to Hu Jintao have railed against an attitude of "Han chauvinism" toward the Tibetans and other peoples, the party-state's policies and actions have sent a contradictory message. Mao constantly professed the need for Han cadres and people to 'help' the backward minority peoples develop their economy and society, and there are elements of this same idea in the ambitious Twelfth Five Year Plan adopted by the Party in 2011.

Throughout its history, the Chinese Communist Party has made itself the judge of which aspects of Tibetan culture should be allowed to survive within the PRC, and which must be eliminated as antithetical to the development of socialism. This chauvinistic attitude is a feature of policy and has become pronounced among those who embrace it. In a 1988 lecture in Hong Kong, long after the death of Mao, the internationally prominent Chinese professor of anthropology, Fei Xiaotong, said:

> *…[A]s the national minorities are generally inferior to the Han in the level of culture and technology indispensible for the development of modern industry, they would find it difficult to undertake industrial projects in their own regions, their advantage of natural resources notwithstanding…Therefore, our principle is for the better developed groups to help the underdeveloped ones by furnishing economic and cultural aids.*[8]

Likewise, the image of Tibetans and other 'minority nationalities' as 'exotic' and backward in the official media from 1949 to the present remains false yet startlingly static.

The predominant image is of the smiling, usually female, minority in a colorful native costume, singing and dancing in an exuberant fashion.[9] The state's objectification of minorities in this fashion stands in stark contrast to the intentional blandness of a typical CCP gathering. The party-state consistently sends the message that the minorities—with the help of their more advanced Han brothers and sisters—should focus on obtaining the educational, economic and cultural markers that will eventually allow them to attain the Han's level of modernity and join the vanguard of Chinese society.[10]

Like his predecessors in the Chinese Republican era, Mao recognized that Tibet's trans-border ethnic and international religious links, valuable natural resources and strategic terrain, history of independence from and resistance to assimilation by China, and the expressed desire of the Tibetan leadership to remain disengaged, made binding Tibet to China a paramount challenge. Prior to 1949 Tibetans, with the exception of those in some border areas, had never lived under direct Chinese rule. Tibetans had experienced periods of considerable Mongol and Manchu influence and at times indirect rule at the height of the Yuan and Qing imperial powers. When Tibet was under the domination of the Mongol empire and was made a dependency of the Manchu empire in the 18th century, it was mostly functionally independent. At the height of Yuan (Mongol) and Qing (Manchu) influence in Tibet, Chinese imperial management of Tibetan affairs was limited and indirect—conducted through local Tibetan leadership who engaged in some degree of cooperation with imperial representatives. During periods of chaos or imperial weakness in China, Tibet was functionally independent, notwithstanding Chinese claims of sovereignty. Even in the Tibetan border areas closest to China and areas of mixed population, the emperor relied on cooperation, which was not always forthcoming, from local warlords and influential lamas. Rather than existing in actual political integration with Chinese empires, these frontier areas were often sources of attacks and other challenges to the imperial writ.

At first, the CCP too saw the wisdom in attempting to gain the trust and cooperation of local Tibetan leaders. The principle of 'voluntarism' was essential to early Communist efforts at pacification: it was important to preserve the illusion that the Tibetans had chosen union with the Han as part of their own process of self-determination. For Mao, a key element of maintaining this fiction of 'peaceful liberation' involved the acquiescence of Tibet's leader, the 14th Dalai Lama. Mao knew Tibet had a different international status than other regions claimed by the PRC, and told his generals to be patient, noting: "[I]n Tibet there was not even a single Chinese. So our troops are in a place where there were no Chinese in the past."[11]

Mao saw the Dalai Lama as the key to convincing the religious elites, and then the Tibetan masses, to accept their place within the new multi-nationality Chinese Communist state. Rather than pursue a straight military strategy in Tibet, the PLA was sent to eastern Tibet to force the Lhasa government to the negotiating table, thereby clearing the way for the 'peaceful liberation' of Tibet. Once Kham was militarily defeated, Mao employed well-known religious figures to provide the Lhasa government with assurances about religious freedom under CCP rule.

When this failed to move Lhasa to the table, the PLA attacked and defeated the Tibetan garrison at Chamdo (Chinese: Qamdo or Changdu) in October 1950. The defeated Lhasa government, with no effective international support, had no choice but to negotiate with Beijing. The resulting "Seventeen-Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet" that the Tibetan government signed under duress (making it invalid under international law) was the first formal acknowledgement in Tibet's history of China's sovereignty over Tibet.[12] As part of that 1951 agreement, the Chinese government promised to maintain Tibet's traditional political-economic system, including the rule of the Dalai Lama, until "the people raise demands for reform."[13] While the PRC did hold off in introducing 'democratic reforms' in central Tibet until after the flight of the Dalai Lama in 1959, they did not view the agreement as covering the Tibetan areas of Kham and Amdo that had been outside the effective control of the Lhasa government in 1949. In those areas, reforms were launched in short order. The growing Tibetan revolt against Chinese reforms in those areas eventually spread to Lhasa, where the popular uprising and its repression resulted in the Dalai Lama's flight to exile, and effectively ended the policy of gradualism in central Tibet.

Despite his personal animus toward religion, Mao was not above using religious leaders to introduce 'democratic reforms' or appropriating religious imagery,[14] and the cult of personality around Mao was replete with ritualistic behavior normally associated with religious fervor.[15] Marxist theory suggested that minority cultural forms could be used as a non-threatening means to inculcate the socialist message in the minority group, with the ultimate goal of achieving cultural assimilation and the realization of the "new socialist man."[16] A critical aspect of the Chinese Communist Party's approach to Tibet was the party-state's ultimate intention to replace religion—or what it often termed 'superstition'—with Marxist ideology. The intertwining of religion with the economic and political administration of the state in Tibet made it especially pernicious in the eyes of the Communist leadership. In 1954, during their last meeting, Mao told the Dalai Lama "religion is poison" that harms the development of society, and that Tibet and Mongolian areas were both poisoned by it.[17] The Dalai Lama marks this exchange with Mao as the beginning of his realization about the true nature of the Chinese Communist threat to Tibetan Buddhism.

After the Dalai Lama was compelled to flee into exile in 1959, the party-state began conflating religious adherence and loyalty to him with 'local nationalism' or a desire to 'split' Tibet from China. When Tibetans responded to subsequent attacks on their loyalty to the Dalai Lama with intense resistance, their response served to reinforce the authorities' views of the integral links between Tibetan Buddhism and local nationalism. As such, the animosity toward religion that was so much in evidence in the early days of the PRC has not abated in Tibet and remains a feature of the party-state's policies there. Even at times when the party-state was more tolerant of religious practice, it was always as a means to the end of advancing the party-state's goals. In 1982, at a time when Tibet was experiencing policy liberalization under then Communist Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang, Beijing issued *The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country's Socialist Period* (hereinafter, *Document 1924).* This authoritative and comprehensive statement on the permissible scope of religious freedom, "declared religious tolerance to be a necessary step in the path towards eradication of religion."[18] More recently, according to a poster seen hanging at the Larung Gar Buddhist encampment in Kham, the CCP's official Marxist dialectic view of religion holds that, "in a class society, the main role of religion is manifested in the benefits it derives by means of exploitation which then become its main tool for self-preservation. However, under certain conditions, religion can play a positive role in the struggle of the oppressed."

This CCP view of religion foresees "the inevitable demise of religion, but a demise which cannot be man-made and in addition, the demise of religion will be a long-term historical process." Furthermore, "as far as the state is concerned, religion is a personal matter, but it is not a personal matter for workers, the proletariat, the Party and the government… engaging in struggle against religion is an overall duty of engaging in proletarian revolution."[19]

This concept of class struggle is another key ideological element that has shaped CCP policy in Tibet over time. Mao and his revolutionary colleagues were deeply committed to the idea of 'class struggle' as the means of advancing socialism. Having a 'bad' class background was a serious—potentially fatal—problem in the early decades of the PRC. In Tibet, the upper classes, including the 'landlords' and educated elites most vigorously targeted by Mao and his CCP colleagues, were largely comprised of monastics and the remnants of secular Tibetan aristocracy that had supported theocratic rule. Class struggle in Tibet became synonymous with attacks on 'reactionary' religious leaders, institutions and practices. Long after class struggle ceased to be a policy tool in China proper, it has remained a consistent element of PRC policy and propaganda in Tibet. In 1996, then-Communist Party Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) Chen Kuiyuan, in language evocative of the Cultural Revolution, said: "There are a few die-hard reactionaries in the monasteries who are hell-bent on following the Dalai… In order to beat the splittists and sabotage activities of the Dalai Clique and protect the normal religious life of the masses of religious devotees, we must carry out a carefully differentiated rectification of the monasteries within our region."[20] More recently, on March 24, 2012, the Chinese state news service, Xinhua, carried an unsigned commentary that appealed to class struggle, claiming that "The Dalai Lama still treats himself as the serf owner, Tibet as his property and Tibetan people as his slaves."[21]

Consistent with the CCP's theories of economic determinism, Chinese policies in Tibet prioritize economic transformation for the benefit of the ruling party. For the CCP, the restructuring of the Tibetan economy was initially linked to class struggle and an assertion of socialist values under Mao. The failure of this approach was followed by the sweeping transformation of Tibet's socio-economic landscape through the 'reform and opening up' policies instituted by Deng Xiaoping after Mao's death in 1976. The early economic policy rested on a utopian narrative that cast minority nationalism and national identity as products of socio-economic disparity, and posited that differences among nationalities would wither away once these inequalities were addressed through the introduction of socialism. This policy approach delegitimized Tibetan values and traditional knowledge that differed from or conflicted with the 'modern' and 'scientific' approaches of the Chinese party-state. The role of monasteries as large landowners, and the hereditary system of labor attached to the monastic land-holdings were early targets of democratic reform. Some of these reforms, such as the cancellation of debts and hereditary labor obligations, and the breaking up of large monastic estates into individual plots of land with titles distributed to those who had worked them, were at first welcomed by many at the bottom rungs of Tibet's socio-economic ladder. Other elements of economic reform—from the rapid forced collectivization of the Great Leap Forward to the state-led infrastructure projects of the Western Development Plan (WDP)—have consistently met with resistance from many Tibetans.

In *Communalization in a Single Stride*, Xie Zhanru, Communist Party Secretary of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (Gansu Province), described the rapid collectivization that was underway as part of the Great Leap Forward in 1958:

> *46,000 Tibetan herdsmen, who only a short time ago still basically lived in a feudalistic society, have now, on the basis of having scored victories in the suppression of counter-revolutionaries and carried out a social reform…singing and dancing, have reached heaven in one stride, taking them into People's Communes in which are carried the seeds of communism. …[T]he culture of the pastoral people is quite backward, and their level of science and technology even lower… [but] after a few years of socialist ideological education by the Party, they abolished their superstitions, liberated their thoughts, promoted their class consciousness, determined to follow the socialist road.*[22]

Comrade Xie's report conspicuously fails to mention the extreme resistance that forced collectivization provoked across the Tibetan plateau, as well as the widespread and severe famine—the first in Tibetan history—that resulted from this radical alteration of centuries of pastoral and agricultural practices developed to suit Tibet's unique environment and sensitive ecosystem.

Despite the repeated failure of successive iterations of PRC economic policy to improve the livelihoods of most Tibetans or achieve its assimilation goals, the Chinese party-state remains committed to using economic development as a primary means of pacification and assimilation of Tibetans. This policy has evolved over time to the Great Western Development Plan, developed in 1999–2000. In 1997, Politburo member Li Ruihuan succinctly summed up the political imperatives behind Chinese economic policy in Tibet: "Expanding Tibet's economy is not a mere economic issue, but a major political issue that has a vital bearing on Tibet's social stability and progress. This work not only helps Tibet, but is also related directly to the struggle against the Dalai Lama's splittist attempts."[23] Economic determinism remains the operative attitude of Chinese policymakers, even as the widespread protests of 2008 clearly demonstrated that double-digit GDP growth in many Tibetan areas is not the kind of social and political change that Tibetans seek.

## Tibetan Autonomy with Chinese Characteristics

The implementation of the party-state's ideological and other ambitions in Tibet has taken place through a carefully constructed set of political, economic, security and social controls that are labeled as 'autonomous' but actually place little or no meaningful authority or responsibility in the hands of Tibetans. While the system that has evolved

ostensibly provides for flexible governance and policy making in Tibetan autonomous areas, these structures are in reality under the substantive control of parallel extra-legal Chinese Communist Party organs, especially the Central Party leadership. The CCP, not Tibetans, makes decisions about development, governance and cultural expression in Tibet. The measures of political, economic, security and social control developed by the party-state are recorded in various official documents, directives and guidelines, as well as authoritative Party work plans and reports from work forums on Tibet. While these latter documents have no formal legal standing, they are in fact the most important statements of the party-state's intentions and program plans. Tibetans can and do participate in this political management system, but they remain locked out of the power structures that shape its design and determine its function. The heavy involvement of the central authorities and CCP organs in making and implementing policy, coupled with the ideological and cultural elements previously outlined, have ensured that Tibetans often experience the worst excesses of CCP rule.

## Legal Framework

The earliest policy documents of the PRC laid the groundwork for the system of autonomy under the authority of the central government. The 1949 Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee (hereinafter 'Common Program') provided nationalities equal rights and duties within the PRC; prohibited discrimination, oppression or acts of "disruption to the unity of the various nationalities;" and granted minorities freedom to develop their languages, and preserve or reform their traditions, customs and religious beliefs. It also vaguely called for the creation of 'various kinds of autonomous organizations' to be set up in minority areas to permit the practice of regional autonomy. Likewise, the 1951 Seventeen-Point Agreement between the Lhasa government and the PRC stated that Tibetans "shall have the freedom to develop their spoken and written language and to preserve or reform their customs, habits and religious beliefs…" and preserved, for a time, localized rule under Tibetan leadership.

The PRC's nationalities policy was further articulated in the 1952 General Program for the Implementation of Regional Autonomy of Nationalities (hereinafter 'General Program'). The General Program established the local government of autonomous regions under "the unified leadership of the central government," with intermediate levels of non-autonomous government serving as the immediate supervisory units. Economic authority was specifically exempted as the exclusive prerogative of the central government. Autonomous areas would undergo 'reforms' under the guidance of "local leaders who are associated with the people, and highly patriotic cadre." The General Program also spelled out national minorities' rights to "freedom of thought, speech, publication, assembly, association…religious belief, and the freedom to hold processions and demonstrations."[24] The final article of the General Program was the most critical (and revealing of intent) as it vested the interpretation of these rights and the other elements of the program exclusively with the central government.

Similar provisions in terms of the allocation of and caveats to rights were repeated in subsequent iterations of the Chinese constitution and the various laws on regional ethnic autonomy. While the 1954 Chinese constitution reiterated the rights of minorities and called for the organs of autonomous governments to be constituted "in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the people of the nationality," in reality autonomous areas were functionally and structurally indistinguishable from local governments in Chinese areas. The 1975 and 1978 constitutional revisions, promulgated at the end of the Cultural Revolution, downgraded autonomy in both law and practice. Constitutional drafts from the Cultural Revolution period removed virtually all reference to minority nationalities and stripped away provisions intended to address their particular concerns—including preservation of culture. The 1975 and 1978 constitutions further eroded the rights of minority nationalities—including downgrading certain "rights" to "freedoms"– and the exercise of self-governance was shifted from nationalities to Party structures, with higher organs of state empowered to "fully safeguard the exercise of autonomy…and actively support the minority nationalities in carrying out the socialist revolution and socialist construction."[25]

The current legal framework is the 1982 constitution and the 1984 Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law (REAL). In the extent of freedoms it articulates and the language it uses, the current constitution is closer to the 1954 constitution than its predecessors. In addition to guaranteeing all Chinese citizens freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of association, the current constitution proclaims, "all ethnic groups have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their own folkways and customs."[26] It also requires that the chair or vice chair of the People's Congress and the top official of the autonomous area must be a member of the minority nationality of the designated area. The 1984 REAL goes into greater detail on the implementation of the constitutional guidance, covering other aspects of governance such as the legal system and legislative processes, but each of the rights and privileges it spells out for autonomous areas contains crippling caveats.

The guarantees on minority religious and educational rights are limited by requirements that any autonomous policies be consistent with 'legal stipulations' and other central government regulations. In particular, autonomous regional governments are required to "[P]lace the interests of the state as a whole above anything else," resting the National People's Congress and its Standing Committee with the power to determine such interests. As they appear on paper, amendments to the REAL in 2001 reflected the central authorities' emphasis on economic development as the solution to disparities between the Han and minority nationalities; but the intended outcome of the REAL and its amendments was to drive the assimilation of minorities into the Chinese state. Thus, the articles that appeared to give flexibility to autonomous areas were illusory.

In addition to the REAL, the National People's Congress and its Standing Committee have produced scores of legislative, regulatory and policy directives dealing with issues of particular importance to minority nationalities. These include laws on grasslands and mineral resources, of which the focus is economic development, and which include no mechanism for ensuring even minimal local consultations. In general these laws are drafted to be consistent with the state's view that the natural resources of autonomous areas are to be exploited for the benefit of the Chinese state. The underlying logic of the current policy approach is essentially the same, as exemplified in the Great Western Development Plan and the focus on extractive industries in Tibet.

In addition to legislation, the State Council and its subordinate entities issue regulations to further the implementation of PRC policies. These regulations have the effect of law and are promulgated at the national, provincial and local levels. Rules related to Tibetan Buddhism are one of the most prolific and specific areas of regulation, reflecting the concerns the authorities attach to controlling religious practice in Tibetan areas. Since 2009, the central authorities and nine of the ten Tibetan autonomous prefectures have issued or drafted regulatory measures that substantially expanded the state's infringement on religious freedom in Tibetan Buddhist institutions.[27]

One particularly consequential regulation is the State Administration for Religious Affairs' (SARA) Order Number 5, "Management Measures for the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism" that was promulgated and came into effect in 2007. This regulation mandates that all reincarnations of lamas must have government approval and that reincarnations without official approval are to be "illegal or invalid."[28] The regulation also requires recognized reincarnate lamas to "respect and protect the principles of the unification of the state, protecting the unity of the minorities, protecting religious concord and social harmony, and protecting the normal order of Tibetan Buddhism."[29]

To implement state policies, a system of Democratic Management Committees (DMCs) functions in monasteries under the purview of the Religious Affairs Bureau and the Public Security Bureau. The DMCs act as the disciplinary body and report to local security; control who can enter the monastery and keep track of their activities; and organize political education, manage financial affairs, etc. The DMC operates in conjunction with local work teams, specially formed units of government personnel who are sent to conduct 'patriotic re-education' in an institution or locality. The work teams routinely move into monasteries and nunneries for months at a time "to carry out investigations, hold meetings, conduct surveillance and identify candidates for arrest."[30] Jing Wei, the author of *100 Questions about Tibet*, says that the DMC "receives guidance and support from relevant government departments in charge

of religious affairs, and keeps them informed of any problem in implementing state policies…"[31] Through the DMCs, the entire religious establishment is turned into a political battlefield to bend the loyalties of monks and nuns towards the Communist Party, which supplants the monastic authority of the abbot, including his traditional cultural role in the Tibetan community.

While some observers[32] had hoped that the PRC's push to develop legal and regulatory structures would lead to a more responsive and transparent policy environment, this has clearly not been the case in Tibet. More broadly, the practical impact of the changes to the legal and regulatory structure since the end of the Cultural Revolution, including the emphasis on regularized legal and legislative structures, has been limited or negative for Tibetans. The prospects for real reform or a fundamental change in policy in Tibet through the legislative and legal processes are severely constrained by the party-state's inability or unwillingness to examine the critical assumptions underlying its policy approaches—particularly as these barriers relate to the role and interests of the Chinese Communist Party and, more generally, by China's failure to advance broader political reforms.

## Extra-Legal Framework: the Role of the Chinese Communist Party

The PRC has gone to elaborate lengths to establish a formal legal framework for its rule over Tibet and to create governmental institutions with the appearance of policy-making authority. In practice, however, the rights and requirements spelled out in laws and regulations are subordinate to the CCP's interests and subject to its interpretation. To implement its vision in Tibet, the Party has established a set of parallel structures that operate alongside and are entwined with state organs. In addition to its role in shaping the legislative and policy products of the state and controlling the coercive power of the state, the Party has its own particular extra-legal mechanisms for carrying out its priorities in Tibet, including the United Front, work forums, and political campaigns.

Although the PRC's autonomy laws require that the governmental leaders of Tibetan autonomous areas must be Tibetan, there is no such requirement for the position that holds real authority at all levels of the system: Communist Party Secretary. Beginning with Zhang Jingwu (1951–1965), every Communist Party Secretary in the Tibet Autonomous Region but one—Wu Jinghua of the Yi minority—has been Chinese. Likewise, minority representation in the Party as a whole has remained stagnant since the 1950s, even as the percentage of minorities in the population has increased. In the case of Tibetans, the number of Tibetan cadres has shrunk in both absolute and relative terms since 2000.[33] Minority cadres are found disproportionately in the lower levels of the CCP but have not penetrated the inner sanctum of the Party's power, despite quotas and other preferential policies intended to boost minority participation in the Party. Minority cadres who appear to be in senior positions are in truth subordinate to their Han 'deputies' and often viewed by Tibetans as pawns who are manipulated by or owe their position to patronage of Han leaders who hold actual power.[34] The Party has well-developed parallel structures at all levels of government, and persons in all positions of authority are not only drawn exclusively from its ranks but are placed in their positions through an opaque party apparatus known as the Organization Department.[35]

Early on, the CCP employed a 'united front' strategy to implement its nationalities policy. In minority areas, the United Front Work Department (UFWD) of the CCP was tasked with consolidating Party control under an ostensible coalition of non-Communist 'patriotic elements' from the poor and the former ruling classes of minorities, a technique known as 'working from above and below.' The Party artfully cultivated the erstwhile local elites into the United Front by initially permitting them to retain certain privileges and titles but giving them only nominal authority. Members of the lower classes were recruited with an eye toward those who would be the most disgruntled against the former ruling classes: criminals, indentured laborers, beggars, prostitutes and low status persons such as butchers and those who disposed of the dead.[36] They were also given various inducements, such as release from debts or prison, stipends, and honorific titles. During the Cultural Revolution, the united front approach was abandoned in favor of unrestrained class struggle, which viciously

targeted those elites who had initially been brought into the United Front, such as the 10th Panchen Lama.

Following its resurrection during the liberalization of the late 1970s and early 1980s, the United Front has continued to play an important role in the PRC's Tibet strategy. It is not an official part of the government but rather an element of the Party's shadow political structure, directly under the authority of the CCP Central Committee. The UFWD retains responsibility for ensuring that the Party line is carried out correctly in minority areas. It is also responsible for outreach to those outside groups that the Party identifies as relevant to its policy objectives including, in the case of Tibet, the Dalai Lama and his negotiating team as well as other exile Tibetan figures. Inside Tibet, the work of the UFWD still draws on non-Communists who are either loyal to or can be manipulated by the regime.

Another important tool of Party control is the security apparatus. Under the organizing principles of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), its loyalties lie with the CCP rather than the Chinese state. While the non-military security agencies—the People's Armed Police (PAP) and the Public Security Bureau (PSB)—are in some respects agencies of the state, they remain heavily under Party control. The PSB is under the direct control of the Leading Group (*Xitong*) for Political and Legal Affairs of the CCP. As such, it is both part of and beyond the reach of the regular justice system of courts and procurators. The PSB runs a vast system of extra-legal detention centers and also feeds into the formal criminal justice system. As the entity most responsible for surveilling the citizenry, especially those identified as 'troublemakers,' the PSB remains a powerful tool of the party-state and exemplifies the manner in which the CCP has integrated itself into the organs of the state.

The PAP is a national armed civilian police force that is formally under the joint jurisdiction of the Ministry of State Security and the Military Affairs Commission of the CCP's Central Committee. Under the large-scale demobilization and modernization of the PLA that took place in the 1990s, the PAP expanded dramatically. The *New York Times* estimated its numbers in 2009 as high as 1.5 million members, although the Chinese government said the number in 2006 was 660,000.[37] It has frontline responsibility for dealing with domestic disturbances, and includes special units deployed for 'riot control' and 'counter terrorism.'

Since 1980, the CCP has also relied on a policy mechanism known as 'work forums' or 'work meetings' to discuss and formulate Tibet policy. The work forums have been organized under the auspices of the CCP Central Committee, bypassing regional government and Party structures for direct supervision of Tibet.[38] In contrast to People's Congresses and Consultative Committees, these forums are where the CCP does the real work of figuring out the direction of its policies.

The First Tibet Work Meeting was held in 1980. It followed a unique exchange between then Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping and the elder brother of the Dalai Lama, Gyalo Thondup, during which Deng said that apart from the issue of Tibetan independence, all other issues could be discussed and resolved.[39] Three fact-finding delegations sent by the Dalai Lama to Tibet (in August 1979, and in May and July 1980) came out of this exchange. The wildly enthusiastic Tibetan response to the delegations, and the delegations' reports to Beijing about the poverty and privation observed throughout Tibet, shocked the central leadership. The working group that organized the 1980 meeting took evidence from Tibetan and Chinese cadres, and they invited the Panchen Lama to make a submission. The finding of the working group was that political and economic reforms well underway in China were not being applied in Tibet due to the residual influence of radical leftist cadres. They decided to send CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang on a high-level fact-finding mission to the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). His direct observations in May of 1980 led him to call for "full autonomy in the area" and to a brief period of relative liberalization in Tibet.

The Second Tibet Work Meeting, chaired by Hu Yaobang and held in Beijing four years after his trip to Tibet, focused on finding the right policy mix of economic liberalization and political control. The outcomes allowed for the continuation of certain liberalizations but also prioritized the opening of Tibet for business and trade with other provinces, state-owned enterprises and people from anywhere in China. The work plan included the development of a tourist industry, the construction of 43 large infra-

structure projects, and a decision to rely on Chinese cadres, workers and entrepreneurs, in contravention of earlier promises to reduce the number of Han cadres in Tibet. It would become a turning point in Chinese policy for Tibet that has had long-term repercussions on the ability of Tibetans to resist assimilation.

At that time, the Party's development theories for minority areas were heavily influenced by the work of Wang Xiaoqiang and Bai Nanfeng, whose book *The Poverty of Plenty* was published in 1984. Wang and Bai concluded that the western minority areas should be developed "as the providers of energy and mineral resources, to be used by the central provinces where much of China's energy and defense industry is based, the argument being that the wealth created in this region can later be shared with the west. The plan also provides personnel to be transferred from the east to the west in order to raise the level of technology there…"[40] Wang and Bai believed that the leading cause of backwardness in peripheral areas was the "poor quality of human resources" among the minority nationalities, and they critiqued the lack of initiative on the part of the minorities. Although they acknowledged that the policy of the central government had contributed to poverty in Tibet, they singled out Tibetans for their tendency to cling to traditional measures of wealth (animal herds) and for 'wasting' their material wealth on religious pursuits. The work of Wang and Bai, who were associated with a group of relatively liberal economic reformers aligned with Zhao Ziyang, is an example of how the judgment of even those regarded as the most liberal reformers within the Chinese system could be clouded by Han chauvinism on issues of Chinese policy in Tibet.

When the Third National Work Conference on Tibet was held in July 1994, the atmosphere had changed radically. Popular protests in Tibet had led to the imposition of martial law in Lhasa in March 1989, Hu Yaobang died a month later, and CCP General Secretary Zhao Ziyang was purged in May 1989 over his sympathetic views toward the prodemocracy Tiananmen Square student protests. Chinese hard-liner Chen Kuiyuan was appointed TAR Communist Party Secretary in 1992, and his ultra-leftist approach included an uncompromising attitude against religion and emphasis on neo-colonial development policies, which held that Tibet required settling by Chinese in order to reach its social and economic potential. The documents coming out of the 1994 work forum characterized the Dalai Lama as the enemy and called for a campaign of "striking relentless blows" against "the Dalai clique," comparing it to a serpent whose head must be cut off in order to kill it.[41] The forum recommended putting strict limits on the construction of monasteries and on the number of monks allowed to join them. It accused Tibetan cadres of disloyalty, being "hoodwinked" by the Dalai clique, harboring Tibetan nationalist feelings, and other counterrevolutionary acts. It also announced 62 new construction projects, which required the importation of additional Chinese laborers into Tibet—a policy referred to as "opening the door wider in Tibet."[42]

The Fourth Work Forum on Tibet, held in June 2001, came close on the heels of the announcement of the Western Development Plan in January 2000 and the adoption of the Tenth Five-Year Plan in March 2001. Speaking at the Fourth Work Forum, then Party Secretary Jiang Zemin declared that development and long-term stability in Tibet were "related to the strategic implementation of great western expansion, to national unity and social stability, to the unification and security of the motherland, and to our national image and international struggle… Safeguarding stability and development in Tibet as well as the unification and security of the motherland is an important political task of Tibet work."[43] This openly political construct of Tibet's role in national security distinguished it from other regions implicated in the project, both from the central government's viewpoint and in terms of local response, but its emphasis on the political dimension of development in Tibet was consistent with Party policy.

The fifth and most recent Tibet Work Forum was held in January 2010 and attended by more than 300 of China's most senior Party, government and military leaders. Notably, for the first time, the forum formally recognized the unity of Tibetan areas outside the TAR by including representatives from those areas and applying its policy prescriptions to all Tibetan autonomous areas. The CCP's 2010 policy prescriptions for Tibet continue to hew to the principle that rapid, state-led economic development and integration—by force if necessary—is the answer to

stability and security problems in Tibet. Interestingly, discernable reports of the 2010 proceedings did not feature to the same extent the customary vitriol on the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism. Indeed Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao was quoted referencing the "material and intangible cultural heritage of Tibet" during the closing ceremonies.[44] Despite this being the first Work Forum since the 2008 protests, these events were referred to only obliquely and without the usual blaming of outside agitators. The reporting also emphasized Tibet's environment, particularly water resources, in the context of a broader concern over security and emphasized the need for improving the livelihoods of poor and rural Tibetans (i.e. 'human development') in a way that was notably absent from the last two Work Forum documents. Whether this presentation of policy will translate into better practices on the ground remains to be seen, but indications are not positive up to now. Likewise, the Chinese government's decision to invite the representatives of the Dalai Lama for a round of dialogue immediately after the conclusion of the work forum raised some hopes for discussions on substance, but there has been no subsequent meeting since the January 2010 round of talks.[45]

In addition to work forums, the party-state promulgates a range of planning documents—five-year plans, development plans, and so on—that elucidate its objectives and the rationale behind them. While aspirational and propagandistic in nature, these documents do provide insight into the overall direction of Party policy, and the treatment of Tibet within these documents has been consistent with broader trends in Party policy on the ground. They also serve as important benchmarks by which the Party evaluates the performance of its cadres.

The party-state has also used political campaigns to articulate and achieve its policy goals. Such campaigns began during the Maoist era when they were a constant feature and had life-and-death consequences, and they continue to the present—from the early anti-rightists campaign and the Cultural Revolution up through more recent strike hard and pro-atheism campaigns. The Party typically launches political campaigns at the central level pursuant to a decision that a certain policy is not moving quickly or effectively enough toward its goals, but lower levels also launch campaigns in response to emergent situations. Campaigns are announced through propaganda directives identifying themes, targets and objectives.

Campaigns rely on generating revolutionary fervor among cadres and the people, and they often employ extralegal tactics, such as struggle sessions, torture, and attacks on culture or religious beliefs. It is unsurprising that such extreme campaigns are regularly used to force compliance in Tibet, where there has been no legitimate attempt by the CCP to engage Tibetans on equal footing in dialogue about the underlying grievances resulting from acute distinctions of culture and identity between Chinese and Tibetans.

By looking at the ideological and nationalist roots of Chinese Communist rule in Tibet, the legal and extra-legal methods through which Chinese rule is implemented in Tibet, and the continuum of Tibetans' experience of autonomy within the People's Republic of China, this section makes the case that Tibetan culture is systematically undermined and endangered by the Chinese party-state.

## In Their Own Words

**Chen Kuiyuan, TAR Communist Party Secretary (1992–2000)**, was one of the most aggressive Chinese leaders in recent Tibetan history. His authority in Tibet coincided with a period of repression and harsh rhetoric directed at the Dalai Lama. Chen maintained that the main cause of instability in Tibet was the existence of the Dalai Lama and his government in exile and called for them to be "uprooted."

> *Religious believers, and even some Party members and cadres, are not able to free themselves from the shackles of their outlook on the world as seen from the religious idealism. … They waste their precious time in futile efforts in praying for individual happiness in the next world; instead of using their limited financial resources to improve their economic condition, they unrestrictedly donate their money to monasteries; instead of letting their children receive a modern education, they send them to monasteries to become a monk or a nun. Such negative thinking and behavior prevents science and technology from spreading…*
>
> *—Chen, TAR Communist Party Committee, November 1997*

> *Eradicate Tibetan Buddhism and culture from the face of the earth so that no memory of them will be left in the minds of coming generations of Tibetans, except as museum pieces.*
>
> *—Chen, closed-door meeting on Tibet, Chengdu, December 1999*

**Hu Jintao, TAR Communist Party Secretary (1987-1992), President of the People's Republic of China (2003–2012).** In his article "China's Gaping Wound" published in *The New Statesman* on June 14, 2007, Jonathan Mirsky writes that Hu Jintao told him that he disliked Tibet, its lack of culture and its 'dangerous people.'

> *The PLA Garrison, PAPF units and the law enforcement departments in Tibet are the strong pillars and loyal guards in defending the frontier of the motherland and maintaining stability in Tibet. They are an important force in building of both material and spiritual civilization...*
>
> *—Hu Jintao, speech marking the 50th anniversary of the 'peaceful liberation of Tibet,' July 2001*

> *[China] ushered in a new era in which Tibet would turn from darkness to light, from backwardness to progress, from poverty to affluence and from seclusion to openness.*
>
> *—Hu Jintao, speech marking the 50th anniversary of the 'peaceful liberation of Tibet,' July 2001*

**Zhang Qingli, TAR Communist Party Secretary (2000–2010)**, is known for his tough policies in minority regions. He was frequently quoted in the official Chinese media describing the Dalai Lama in inflammatory terms, such as "a wolf in monk's clothes, a devil with a human face." He was replaced in August 2011 and named Communist Party Secretary of Hebei province.

> *I have never understood why a person like the Dalai Lama was honored with this [1989 Nobel Peace Prize] prize. What has he done for peace? How much guilt does he bear toward the Tibetan people! How damaging is he for Tibet and China! I cannot understand why so many countries are interested in him.*
>
> *—Zhang, Der Spiegel interview, August 2006*

[1] Tsering Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows*, p. xxii.

[2] Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows*, p. xxiii.

[3] Views differ somewhat on the historical status of Tibet, but most scholars agree that Tibet was at least *de facto* independent. See: "Tibet: The Position in International Law Report of the Conference of International Lawyers on Issues relating to Self-Determination and Independence of Tibet," Robert McCorquodale and Nicholas Orosz, (London: 1994); M.C. van Walt van Praag, *The Status of Tibet*, (Boulder: 1987), pp. 134–141; ICJ 1960 Report, p. 5.

[4] Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, (New York; Columbia University Press: 2005), p. 225.

[5] June Teufel Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions: Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China*, (1976), pp. 16–18, quoting Sun Yat-Sen, Sun Yat-sen: His Political and Social Ideals (Leonard S. Hsu, ed.; 1933).

[6] Brandt, Schwartz, and Fairbank, *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism*, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1950), pp. 220–24.

[7] Smith, *China's Tibet?*, p. 26.

[8] Fei Xiaotong, "Tanner Lecture: Plurality and Unity in the Configuration of the Chinese Nationality," delivered in Hong Kong (1988); cited in Gladney, Dru, *Representing Nationality in China: Refiguring Majority/Minority Identities*, Journal of Asian Studies, v. 53, no. 1 (AAS: 1994), p. 100.

[9] See e.g. Louisa Schein, "Gender and Internal Orientalism in China," *Modern China* vol. 23 no.1 (Jan. 1997), pp. 69–98.

[10] Gladney, p. 116.

[11] Mao Zedong, 1977 as quoted by Melvyn Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, (Berkeley, CA; Univ. of California Press, 1997), pp. 43–44.

[12] For additional information on the Seventeen Point Agreement, see: ICT, "China's Propaganda on the 17 Point Agreement Distorts History and Impedes Path to Resolving the Tibet Problem," May 19, 2011; available at: *http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-press-releases/china%E2%80%99s-propaganda-17-point-agreement-distorts-history-and-impedes-path-resolving-tibet-*.

[13] Seventeen-Point Agreement, point 11.

[14] See Smith, *China's Tibet?*, pp. 101–102 and 170; and Israel Epstein, *Tibet Transformed*, p. 198.

[15] For a discussion of the deification of Mao during the Cultural Revolution, see Xing Lu, *Rhetoric of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Impact on Chinese Thought, Culture and Communication*, (U. of S. Carolina Press: 2004), pp. 132–137, 147–148.

[16] Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National-Colonial Question* (1975) p. 393.

[17] 14th Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People*, pp. 117–118 (New York: Potala, 1983).

[18] ICT, *Forbidden Freedom: Beijing's Control of Religion in Tibet*, (Washington, DC: 1990), p. 16.

[19] ICT, "Communist Party as Living Buddha," (Washington, DC: 2007), p. 110.

[20] Tibet Information Network, "1,000 monks face expulsion in Lhasa re-education drive," TIN News Update, August 15, 1996; available at: *WTN archives: http://tibet.ca/en/newsroom/wtn/archive/old?y=1996&m=8&p=16_1*.

[21] Xinhua, "Commentary: Seven Questions to the 14th Dalai Lama," March 24, 2012; available at: *http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-03/24/c_131487143_2.htm*.

[22] Full text of *Communalization in a Single Stride* is available in TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, pp. 161–163.

[23] Xinhua, "Efforts to continue to aid Tibet called for," April 16, 1997.

[24] ICJ 1997 report, p. 85.

[25] 1975 PRC Constitution, article 24.

[26] 1982 PRC Constitution, article 4.

[27] U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 2011 Annual Report—Tibet Excerpt (Washington DC: U.S.Govt. Printing Office; October 10, 2011), p. 7.

[28] Xinhua, "Reincarnation of living Buddha needs gov't [sic] approval," *China Daily*, August 4, 2007, available at: *http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2007-08/04/content_5448242.htm*. Translation of the full text of Order Number 5, available from the International Campaign for Tibet report, "New Measures on Reincarnation Reveal Party's Objectives of Political Control," August 15, 2007: *http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/new-measures-reincarnation-reveal-partys-objectives-political-control*.

[29] ICT, "New Measures."

[30] ICT, *Forbidden Freedoms*, p. 26.

[31] Jing Wei, *100 Questions about Tibet*, (Beijing: 1989), and *100 Questions and Answers about Tibet*, (Beijing: 2001), cited in *Authenticating Tibet*, p. 170.

[32] See e.g. the New York Times 2007 series on the rule of law in China, available here: *http://www.nytimes.com/ref/world/asia/rule_index.html*.

[33] Anne-Marie Blondeau and Katia Buffetrille, editors, *Authenticating Tibet: Answers to China's 100 Questions*, (Berkley: U. of California Press; 2008), p. 202.

[34] For an in-depth examination of Tibetan attitudes towards Tibetan cadre, see Robert Barnett, "The Babas are Dead: Street Talk and Contemporary Views of Leaders in Tibet," presented at the 1999 Conference of the International Association of Tibetan Studies and available at: *www.columbia.edu/itc/ealac/barnett/pdfs/link7-babas.pdf*.

[35] For an overview of the work of this entity, see Richard McGregor's *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers*, (New York: HarperCollins; 2010), pp. 70–104.

[36] Dreyer, p. 110; Smith, *China's Tibet?*, p. 356.

[37] Michael Wines, *New York Times*, "China Approves Law Governing Armed Police Force," 27 August 27, 2009, *http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/28/world/asia/28china.html*.

[38] Shakya, *Dragon*, p. 380.

[39] Footnote: Remarks by Lodi Gyari, Special Envoy of H.H. the Dalai Lama, at the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., November 14, 2006. In his remarks, Gyari says "This assurance was conveyed by Deng Xiaoping to Gyalo Thondup, the brother of H.H.the Dalai Lama in 1979. It was reiterated by Li Xianian to the first fact-finding delegation sent by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to China and Tibet in 1979. It was restated to Gyalo Thondup by Ding Guangen, head of the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party, during their meeting in Beijing on June 22, 1992. It was further confirmed by a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement on August 25, 1993."

[40] Nanfeng Bai and Xiaoqiang Wang, *The Poverty of Plenty*, (Macmillan, 1991) p.vx.

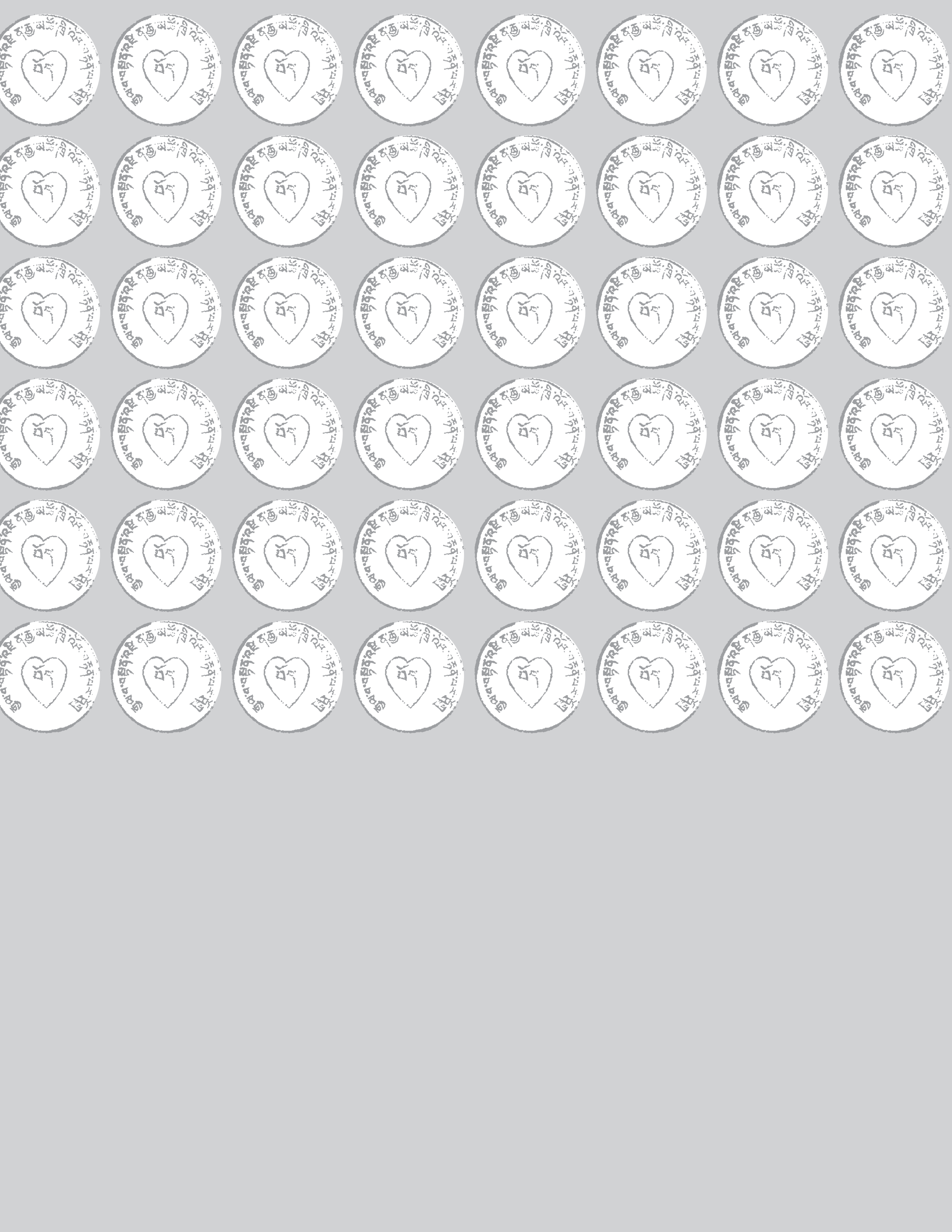
[41] *Cutting Off the Serpent's Head: Tightening Control in Tibet, 1994–1995* (New York: Tibet Information Network and Human Rights Watch, 1996), p. 20.

[42] See "Third National Work Conference on Tibet July 20–23," *Xinhua New Agency*, Beijing, July 26, 1994; and "Tibet to Implement Forum Guidelines," *Tibet Daily*, August 2, 1994.

[43] Jiang Zemin, Remarks at the Fourth Tibet Work Forum, published by *Xinhua* June 29, 2001.

[44] ICT, "Top-level Meeting in Beijing Sets Strategy on Tibet," January 29, 2011. Available at: *www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/top-level-meeting-beijing-sets-strategy-tibet*.

[45] Since September 2002 Special Envoys to the Dalai Lama have met with Chinese officials in the United Front Work Department on nine occasions to work toward a mutually agreeable resolution to the situation in Tibet.



# DEVASTATION OF TIBETAN CULTURE

This section examines the context in which the elemental aspects of Tibetan identity—Tibetan language, cultural expression, nomadic pastoralism and Buddhism—came into immediate conflict with the essential objectives of the Chinese Communist authorities, with tragic results for the Tibetan people.

When the People's Liberation Army crossed into eastern Tibet and subsequently attacked central Tibet, the Tibetan state had been *de facto* if not *de jure* independent for four decades since the end of the short lived Qing occupation of Tibet (1909–1911). The deeply altered political situation for Tibetans of direct Chinese rule was itself jarring enough, but the effect was magnified by the fact that Tibet's new Chinese Communist Party rulers were opposed to many of the pillars of Tibetan culture, including and especially religion, on a deeply ideological level.

The CCP's Marxist ideology cast minority nationalism and national identity as products of socio-economic disparity—specifically class differences—and posited that minority nationalism would wither away once these inequalities were addressed. The resulting policy approach reinforced a superiority of CCP values and delegitimized Tibetan values that were different from or in conflict with them. For more than six decades, the Chinese state has relentlessly pursued its vision of 'China's Tibet,' with a heavy emphasis on the Party's priorities for economic development and societal transformation, and a strong reliance on Han cadres to 'help' move the Tibetans toward goals that the Chinese state has set for them. During this period, the Chinese party-state was intent on radically transforming Chinese and Tibetan societies to achieve rapid social and economic progress on the path to socialism.

This section of the report will discuss the ways in which, during the process of pursuing its transformative goals, the Chinese party-state has done incalculable damage to the Tibetan people and their culture. The early years of the PRC marked the apex of physical destruction, but the Chinese party-state's effort to assert control over Tibetan culture has been continuous. Since the death of Mao in 1976 and the beginning of the 'reform era,' the nature of China's assault on Tibetan culture has changed, but the intended result remains the same. While the party-state now relies more on rapid economic growth and demographic change to grind down Tibetan identity, its overriding goal remains the assimilation of Tibet into the Chinese state. China sets the terms of what aspects of Tibetan culture are permissible, and it is not reluctant about using the coercive apparatus of the state to work its will. At certain times of particularly intense repression during the past six decades, the specificity and ferocity of the attacks on Tibetan cultural institutions and Tibetans themselves have arguably the conventional threshold for acts of genocide. Throughout the period of Chinese Communist rule, however, its policies and practices in Tibet have regularly constituted key elements of cultural genocide.

## THE MAO ERA: REVOLUTION, REPRESSION AND RESISTANCE

> *…this agreement establishing a great era when Tibetans shall be happy in Tibet and Chinese shall be happy in China shall never be changed…*
>
> —*From the bilingual inscription on the Sino-Tibetan Treaty pillar, Lhasa circa 822 CE*

The years between 1949 and the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 generally are considered the peak period of physical and cultural assault on Tibet. While China was convulsed by the CCP's revolutionary campaigns—such as the Great Leap Forward, anti-rightist and anti-local nationalist campaigns, and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution—Tibet was under additional layers of pressure throughout the early decades of Chinese Communist rule. In Chinese Marxist (and racialist) terms, China's leaders viewed Tibetans as backward and in need of "leaping the stages of history" in order to catch up with the Chinese. When highly destabilizing 'democratic reforms' were implemented in Tibetan areas, they prompted widespread popular resistance, which at times included an armed guerrilla force

supported by covert assistance from the United States.[1] This was particularly true when the CCP's policies went beyond common sense economic and social reforms, such as land titling and provision of basic services, into areas that attacked key features of Tibetan identity, such as religion, language and the underpinnings of nomadic pastoralism. The Chinese Communists were particularly frustrated by Tibetan resistance to Communist policies, a resistance that was rooted in Tibetans' refusal to stop practicing Tibetan Buddhism after the imposition of 'democratic reforms.' The CCP responded to Tibetans' tenacious attachment to their distinct identity by escalating its brutality through extra-judicial executions, public humiliation of revered religious figures, torture, intentional destruction of cultural heritage, and population transfers.

From the perspective of the Genocide Convention, the unrelenting, often violent, nature of the CCP's attacks on Tibetans as a group and the pillars of Tibetan culture in particular, were qualitatively different from the extremism that was also taking place in China proper because a powerful majority was imposing its will by force against a relatively powerless minority. It was during this period that some scholars and international jurists have concluded that the Chinese authorities committed or sanctioned acts of genocide, as defined in the Genocide Convention.[2]

## Invasion and Occupation

The devastation of Tibetan culture during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) may be well known, but it is less widely understood that a tremendous amount—possibly even a majority—of the physical destruction of Tibetan cultural institutions took place prior to 1965. During this period there were three key sources of cultural devastation in Tibet: the imposition of 'democratic reforms' that attacked the pillars of Tibetan culture, including Tibetan Buddhism; the Chinese authorities' brutal response to Tibetan resistance to democratic reforms; and the forced collectivization and tragically preventable famine of the Great Leap Forward. While the stated purpose of these reforms was to 'liberate' the Tibetan people from their feudal past, the true purpose—and effect on the ground—was to gain social and cultural control over Tibetans' lives. Central Tibet was initially spared most of the CCP's reforms pursuant to the Seventeen-Point Agreement, but the 1954 establishment of the Preparatory Committee of the Autonomous Region of Tibet (PCART) and the subsequent flight into exile of the Dalai Lama, signaled the end of this privileged status. The implementation of 'democratic reforms,' including the beginning of collectivization in Kham and Amdo, prompted a widespread revolt that eventually bled over into central Tibet. When all of Tibet broke into open revolt in 1959 and the Dalai Lama was compelled to flee into exile, the Seventeen-Point Agreement was fully abandoned and the PRC placed all of Tibet under direct rule. Combined with the disastrous policies of the Great Leap Forward (1958–1961), which hit Tibetan areas particularly hard, the first 15 years of Chinese rule in Tibet were marked by unprecedented upheaval, death and cultural destruction.

'Democratic reforms' in some areas of eastern Tibet began as early as 1950 but the most intense period of reforms took place in the middle and latter parts of the decade. In 1956, the CCP launched China on a crash-course toward socialism with a campaign known as the 'High Tide of Socialist Transformation.' Mao argued that the minority nationalities deserved to be included in this transformation because to deny them its benefits was a form of "looking down" on them.[3] This idea set the stage for later criticisms that those trying to protect minority cultures and traditions were 'rightists' and not acting in the best interests of the minorities.[4] For example, in a brief period during the 'Hundred Flowers' campaign (summer 1957), Tibetans and other nationalities demanded greater cultural, religious and political autonomy. The Party leadership under Mao responded by ascribing such demands to 'local nationalism' and launching a specific 'Anti-Local Nationalism' rectification effort under the broader nation-wide 'Anti-Rightist' campaign.

Eastern Tibetan districts that had already been assigned 'autonomous' status were the first to undergo 'democratic reforms.' These reforms consisted of land redistribution, the suppression of 'landlords' and other 'counter-revolutionaries,' and the initiation of class struggle. In eastern Tibet, teams of Chinese and Tibetan officials, including

the PLA, travelled from village to village redistributing property and holding 'struggle sessions' in which landowners and traditional leaders—including lamas and tulkus—were accused of exploiting the people.[5] These struggle sessions, or *thamzing* in Tibetan, were violent affairs that served to harass and intimidate not only the direct victims but also the participants who witnessed their humiliation. A common tactic with senior monks was to accuse them of sexual perversion and rape. While monks were the primary targets, people from all classes could be branded as 'counter-revolutionary' or 'enemy of the people' for having a 'reactionary' attitude—which could include refusing to enthusiastically participate in struggle sessions. In *A Short History of Tibet*, Hugh Richardson writes: "Attacks on religion became more violent. Lamas were assaulted and humiliated; some were put to death. The ordinary people who refused Chinese orders to give up the practice of religion were beaten and had their goods confiscated."[6]

Arjia Rinpoche, who was the abbot of Kumbum Monastery in Amdo until he fled Tibet and claimed political asylum in the United States in 1998, said that in 1957 the PLA forced the monks of his monastery to assemble at Yar Nang Choedra and in a public accusation meeting, more than 500 monks were beaten and arrested.[7] More cycles of arrests took place and by the end of 1958, the Three Red Flags symbolizing the Great Leap Forward, Socialism, and People's Communes were flying above Kumbum. Women were urged to come live inside the monastery's walls and marry the monks who lived there.[8]

Monasteries were targeted not simply because they were seen as exploitative 'landlords' but because the Chinese Communist authorities also saw them as their primary institutional and ideological competitors for political and social control in Tibet. Most monasteries were assumed to have supported or sympathized with those resisting 'democratic reforms.' Contrary to what the Communists expected, however, humiliating and attacking religious institutions served primarily to rally Tibetan nationalist sentiment among all classes of Tibetans. In 1956, Tibetans in Kham were the first to openly revolt against the 'democratic reforms.' In response to initially successful Khampa raids, large numbers of PLA troops were sent into Kham to suppress the rebellion. In the spring of 1956, after the Chinese attempted to arrest local lay and religious leaders in Lithang, several thousand Tibetans sought refuge in Lithang Monastery. The PLA surrounded the monastery and attacked with mortars. When that failed to dislodge the Tibetans, the PLA used Russian-built bombers and "by the time they had dropped all their bombs, nothing was left ... totally gone in a matter of minutes...all the ancient texts, the famous art, the holy relics, the stupas, the largest statue of the Buddha in Tibet ... everything was gone."[9] Approximately three thousand monks, nuns and lay people were believed killed in the siege. "Those same bombers flew to other monasteries that day, in Ba and Markham area, and destroyed them just as they had destroyed Lithang."[10] After the monasteries were bombed, the Tibetan resistance moved into the hills.

In those monasteries that were not physically destroyed or completely depopulated, the authorities targeted the inhabitants for additional 'reforms' and patriotic education, and drastically reduced their numbers. Important tulkus were targeted because of their position and influence, and subjected to special reform initiatives. In one case that intentionally targeted the core of monastic vows, a special tulku educational group was established in Lhasa in 1964, "where more than ten tulkus under the age of 20 were gathered for thought-reform and labor—specifically as butchers and hunters of wild animals."[11]

Monasteries were routinely plundered, their treasures and religious artifacts were looted, and thousands of sutras and scriptures were burned or turned into fertilizer. Precious objects were either melted down or found their way to the art markets of Hong Kong and Tokyo. When Tibetans tried to protect monasteries, they were met with direct and deadly force. In a 1958 incident in Wendu in Amdo, a reported 2,000 Tibetans were gunned down by the PLA for protesting the arrest of a lama.[12] Beyond the monasteries, the authorities cast a wide net, implicating all inhabitants of an area where authorities considered the rebellion to enjoy support. Arjia Rinpoche relates a 1958 incident that Yang Qing Xi, a veteran Chinese cadre, told him about in Gomang County in northeast Tibet:

> *One night the cadres of the People's Liberation Army called the villagers to a meeting held in a local barn. After about 20 minutes, they announced that they had to execute all counter-revolutionaries and rebels. The cadres left the building, locking the door behind them, and then tossed grenades into the barn. The military had already surrounded the area, prepared to shoot anyone who tried to escape. About 200 people, including women, children, and elders, perished… their corpses were tossed into the fields where dogs and wild animals set upon them. The next year, when farmers planted their crops, they found arms and legs scattered everywhere.*[13]

Collectivization of eastern Tibet in 1958 transformed what had been a regional rebellion into Tibet-wide uprising. As the rebellion in eastern Tibet and the subsequent Chinese military response quickly overflowed into central Tibet, the situation there grew increasingly grave. Although 'democratic reforms' had not yet been implemented in central Tibet, by March 1959 sentiment was running high against the Chinese authorities in Lhasa and other areas. It had become increasingly clear that the Chinese intended to implement reforms in central Tibet, with or without the support of the traditional Tibetan leadership, most of who were strongly opposed. After the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa on March 17—having completely lost confidence in his Chinese interlocutors to the point that he, his government and hundreds of thousands of Tibetans believed his life was in danger—the CCP ended what was left of the 'gradual' approach to reform that had been promised for central Tibet. On March 19, Chinese forces bombed the Dalai Lama's summer home, the Norbulingka, and other locations throughout Lhasa, many of which were filled with refugees from eastern Tibet living in the open air. After the bombardment, the streets of Lhasa were reportedly littered with thousands of bodies.[14]

By 1960, Chinese forces had killed a large number of monks and civilians, and destroyed numerous religious structures throughout Tibet as part of the implementation of reforms and in combating the rebellion. A confidential official Chinese document, "Tibet's Status and Basic Duties and Education," published by the TAR Military's Political Bureau in October 1960 states that "from March 1959 [to 1960] 87,000 enemies were exterminated."[15] Another official document, "Tibet's Rebellion Quelled," stated that from February to April 1960, over 18,000 PLA soldiers surrounded the "rebellions" and "killed 1,100, injured 4,800, arrested more than 4,100 and exterminated all the enemies in [Tengchen, Lhari Dzong, Ngamda and Shopamdo]."[16] With most of Tibet militarily under control, the local representatives of the CCP moved forward with renewed 'democratic reforms' in tandem with the reforms of the Great Leap Forward.

Tibet experienced the first famine in its recorded history in the late 1950s when the Chinese leadership launched the disastrous Great Leap Forward. While the forced collectivization of production was a national policy before the Great Leap Forward, this period had a particularly severe impact in Tibet. As in the rest of China, there were atrocities such as people beaten to death in struggle sessions over hoarding a few grains of extra food; the difference in Tibet was that these policies were being imposed by an alien authority that had limited or no knowledge of local conditions or production techniques, in conjunction with a wholesale assault on Tibetan culture. The resulting disruption of traditional livelihoods and population patterns that had permitted Tibetans to exist in harmony with their high-altitude environment for centuries, together with ongoing political persecution related to putting down the ongoing uprising, meant that the Tibetans' suffering from the famine was distinct from their Chinese neighbors.[17]

Agricultural production in Tibet, as befitted its climate and geography, centered on nomadic pastoralism and cultivation of barley. As a result of collectivization, nomads were forcibly settled and most of their animals and husbandry placed under collective rule. Permission from provincial or prefectural authorities hundreds of miles away was required to slaughter a single animal, and forced settlement led to massive starvation of herds when nomads were not allowed to move animals around for grazing. Since ancient times, Tibetan nomads and farmers had engaged in a barter system in which nomads gave salt, butter, meat, dried cheese and wool in exchange for barley, clothes and other items of daily use. By the end of the 1950s, the CCP had forcibly replaced this way of life with a commune system that allowed the authorities to operate a more 'efficient' system of taxation. These taxes were so onerous that they

resulted in grain shortages and forced nomads to slaughter and eat much of their livestock. The late 10th Panchen Lama wrote that "most of the households were ransacked, and almost all of the residents' own stores of grains, meat and butter were taken away… many of the residents were short of grain; some ran out of grain, and were very short of meat, butter, oil and so on; there was not even any lamp oil. Even firewood could not be bought."[18] In remote and distant corners of the Tibetan plateau, furnaces were erected and Tibetans were forced to turn over their traditional jewelry to have it melted down for use in production of 'steel' that was unsuitable for any purpose.

Barley farmers were forced to grow unfamiliar grains that Tibetans had no idea how to prepare. In Kham, the authorities began seizing grain from farmers in 1959; despite bumper crops, many Tibetans said they would have perished if the Chinese had not shown them how to eat leaves and wild grasses.[19] In eastern Tibet, because of the rebellion, much of the population that was forced into collectivization consisted of women, children and the elderly—many of whom were particularly vulnerable to the privations of the famine. The entire population was mobilized in the middle of winter to dig useless irrigation canals and wells. Terracing of land that was suitable to the thick dust-like loess soil of central China was enforced in the mountainous terrain of Tibet with predictably disastrous results. In Zurmong, a small town in eastern Tibet:

> *…all young men had died either in battles or of starvation. The women and children were hedged together to work in the communes and all goods and animals were collectivized. Only a few old men were left in town. The workers were given only one spoonful of tsampa each day which they had to supplement with wild plants and the flesh of dead horses and goats… [T]he produce of the commune, grains, meat, butter, etc. are mostly siphoned off to meet the needs of the 'State Grain Reserve,' 'War Preparation Reserve,' etc. and only a small fraction is left for the consumption by commune members.*[20]

In the Dalai Lama's home county in Amdo, at least 50 percent of the population was believed to have starved to death, and there are estimates that a fifth of the Tibetans in Sichuan perished due to hunger.[21]

For the thousands of Tibetans imprisoned by the Chinese regime in the aftermath of the rebellion, the situation was even more desperate. If they survived the daily regimen of torture and abuse, widespread famine meant there was little left over for inmates in the prisons, work camps and other detention facilities that housed the thousands of 'enemies of the people' the authorities arbitrarily detained. The labor camps in TAR, Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan, where most Tibetan prisoners were sent, had the lowest survival rates in the country.[22] In Drapchi prison in Lhasa, one survivor claimed that between November 1960 and June 1961, 14,000 inmates perished out of a total prison population of 17,000.[23] According to one survivor who spent 21 years in five separate labor camps, "roughly 70,000 Tibetans were imprisoned in north of Lanzhou, 35,000 of whom perished from starvation in 1959–61."[24] Another survivor of the Chinese gulag in Tibet wrote of that period:

> *Each day six to ten prisoners died of starvation. The surrounding areas of Samye were full of buried corpses and, when a strong wind blew, the sand got blown away and dead bodies became exposed… Lack of food and hunger drove us to pick up the smallest insects that crawled on the earth. Carcasses of dead horses, donkeys, dogs and rats became novelties for us. I saw many prisoners dig in toilets in search of insects. A father and son from Gyangtse collected insects in a tin can as we dug canals and ate them in the evenings after boiling them. Many were too exhausted to do anything; they just sat in the toilet and ate the worms that came from their excrement.*[25]

One of the most important records of events in Tibet during the imposition of 'democratic reforms' and the Great Leap Forward comes from the 10th Panchen Lama. In 1962, the Panchen Lama was an avowed supporter of the Chinese state and its ideology who had spent the previous 13-years loyally working with the Communist authorities as part of their United Front. By the end of the Great Leap Forward in 1961, however, he had become so concerned over the situation in Tibet that he sent a "70,000 Character Petition" to Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai detailing the devastating impact that the combination of 'democratic reforms,' repression and famine was having across the Tibetan plateau, with a particular focus on the behavior and attitudes of CCP cadres toward Tibetans. The petition was

a secret document intended only for the eyes of the Communist Party's top leadership, and it began with typical paeans to Zhou and the CCP. When the 10th Panchen Lama addressed the problems arising in Tibet however, his critique was devastating: "the democratic campaign, which was carried out in conjunction with suppression of the rebellion, was a large-scale, fierce, acute and life-and-death class struggle, which overturned heaven and earth."[26] He criticized the implementation of reforms, accusing cadres of painting large numbers of Tibetans as counterrevolutionary or 'black' and of acting out of a "fierce hatred" toward Tibetans.[27]

On the state of Tibetan Buddhism, the Panchen Lama was particularly critical. He wrote, "In the whole of Tibet in the past there was a total of about 110,000 monks and nuns. Of those, possibly 10,000 fled abroad [following the Dalai Lama], leaving about 100,000. After the democratic reform was concluded, the number of monks and nuns living in the monasteries was about 7,000 people, which is a reduction of 93 percent."[28] He continued, "Due to this, the sweet dew of 'teaching, debating and writing' and 'listening, thinking and contemplating' has dried out."[29] The Panchen Lama also reported to Zhou that "Of the 2,500 monasteries which had once existed [in what is now the TAR] only 70 were left," and 98-99 percent of the estimated 1,900 monasteries in Kham and Amdo were also destroyed.[30]

He asserted that the first task of reform appeared to be to attack religion in the name of "eliminating superstition." He was alarmed by the Democratic Management Committees that were set up in monasteries, and whose members "had illicit relations, went with prostitutes, drank excessively and took other such unscrupulous actions…regarded ignoring their vows as nothing, and publicly and unscrupulously engaged in liaisons with women within the monasteries, kept their hair long, changed their clothes …and encouraged the masses of the monks also to do so."[31] As a result of this louche atmosphere, and the fact that monks were spending so much time performing mundane labor, "religious activities were as scarce as stars in the daytime," he wrote,[32] adding that the situation was tantamount to "the elimination of Buddhism [in Tibet]…This is something that I and more than 90 percent of Tibetans cannot endure."[33]

He condemned those who destroyed religious buildings and materials as having "usurped the name of the masses and put on the face [mask or *mianju*] of the masses" and the attempts to portray such destruction as resulting from Tibetans' raised socialist consciousness to be "sheer nonsense which comes from a complete lack of understanding of the actual situation in Tibet."[34]

On the subject of the famine that had swept Tibet, the Panchen Lama was equally scathing. Although he was careful to blame incorrect local implementation of policies amid the suppression of the rebellion for the disastrous impact of the Great Leap Forward, his description of the damage resonates with frustration. He noted that "for a period, because the life of the masses was poverty-stricken and miserable, many people, principally the young and old, died of starvation or because they were physically so weak that they could not resist minor illnesses. Consequently, there has been an evident and severe reduction in the present-day Tibetan population."[35] The passages on famine movingly recount how he learned of the deprivation and death that was taking place across Tibet by talking to local representatives in Amdo (Qinghai), commenting at one point that "it is barely possible to describe the lives of the masses of the agricultural and animal breeding peoples …[T]his really should not have happened."[36]

He reserved his harshest criticism for the local cadres he believed were at the root of the problem because of their lack of understanding of and regard for local knowledge, conditions and people. After expressing concern about those arrested and their loved ones left behind to meet extreme production quotas, he noted that "methods of reform were not based on the wishes, demand and level of consciousness of the majority of the remaining masses of the people…there was no careful consideration of whether or not the conditions were ripe [for collectivization]…the majority of things which should have belonged to the individual were put into the category of things belonging to the collective…"[37] In summary, he declared, "many people thought that the Tibetan nationality was being viciously attacked" due to the authorities' means of suppressing the rebellion, particularly the attacks on Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan nationality "which Tibetans love as their own lives."[38]

While Zhou Enlai initially appeared to welcome the Panchen Lama's testimony about the true situation in Tibet, Mao and others around him were infuriated by it. Mao, who had been temporarily sidelined after the failures of the Great Leap Forward, had regained control of the Party and immediately went after the Panchen Lama. In August 1964, Mao launched a new campaign called the "Socialist Education Movement," under which the Panchen Lama was denounced as a traitor to socialism, removed from his official positions and subjected to seventeen days of struggle sessions. During these struggle sessions, he was accused of absurd crimes: 'attempted restoration of serfdom,' murder, planning to launch a guerrilla war against the state, cohabitating with women, criticizing and opposing China "in a 70,000 character document," supporting the Dalai Lama and misleading the masses, and theft of valuables from monasteries.[39] He was subsequently taken to Beijing and placed under house arrest, where he remained until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

Statistics about Tibetan deaths during this period are difficult to establish due to the lack of a baseline population census for all of ethnographic Tibet prior to the Chinese invasion and the continued exclusion of central Tibet in the PRC's early censuses. However, various estimates place the total figure of Tibetans who are believed to have died in the period 1949–1965 due to famine, fighting, torture, execution or suicide between 500,000 and 800,000.[40] In Tibetan areas of Qinghai province alone, between 1951 and 1957, there was a 20 percent population loss (105,000) and scholar Andrew Fischer believes that the actual number was closer to 150,000.[41] The mortality rates in Tibetan areas of Qinghai and Sichuan provinces during the famine period of the Great Leap Forward were among the highest in China, with one researcher claiming total deaths in Qinghai at 900,000 and nine million in Sichuan, with the Tibetan areas among the worst affected.[42]

While Tibetans were being killed and dying in record numbers, the Chinese state was simultaneously laying the groundwork for the transfer of large numbers of non-Tibetans into Tibet. In 1952, Mao told a group of visiting Tibetans "Tibet covers a large area but is thinly populated. Its population should be increased from the present two or three million to five or six million, and then to over ten million."[43] From 1956, the Chinese authorities launched the *xiafang* or 'downward transfer to the countryside' campaign to move millions of people from the urban areas of China to the remote and sparsely populated regions in the north and west with intention to integrate and assimilate the minorities. Over 600,000 people were sent to Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, East Turkestan and Inner Mongolia in the first years after the campaign was launched.[44] Between 1954 and the mid-1960s, in Qinghai and other provinces there was large-scale settlement of Chinese into Tibet, primarily to construct and labor on state farms.[45]

In August 1957, Zhou Enlai gave an important speech on the incorporation of non-Chinese regions into the national plan. The premier pointed out the shortage of land and underground natural resources in the Chinese-inhabited regions and the importance of developing natural resources in areas populated by the 'fraternal minority nationalities' to support industrialization. Zhou said that the natural resources in the minority regions had been left untapped because of lack of labor power and technological expertise. The Chinese premier said, "Without mutual assistance, especially assistance from the Han people, the minority peoples will find it difficult to make significant progress on their own."[46] The xiafang campaign was intensified during the Great Leap Forward. While the Chinese presence in central Tibet was limited prior to 1959, there were reports of Chinese settlers in Chamdo and areas of southeast Tibet in the early 1960s. These early movements provided the socio-economic base for subsequent, larger population movements into these areas.

In addition to the broad-based political campaigns and the tragically misguided economic reforms, this period saw early attacks on particular aspects of Tibetan culture. The Panchen Lama's petition makes repeated reference to Chinese cadres mocking Tibetans for wearing their traditional clothing, and notes efforts to encourage them to discard it in favor of Han styles. Requirements that official documents be written in Tibetan language were routinely ignored. In the early 1960s the Chinese authorities started to 'reform' Tibetan language by instituting grammatical changes to make it closer to the so-called proletarian language as spoken by the people, but which rendered it unintelligible in the common written form.[47] In addition, some Chinese

words were translated into Tibetan according to their political use, and some Tibetan words were prohibited entirely. For example, Tibetans were prohibited from using the Tibetan word *Gyanak*, their customary term for China, because it implied a separate country from Tibet. Tibetans instead were required to use the Chinese word *Zhongguo* for China, a term which originally referred to the 'middle kingdom' or Chinese states of the central plains, but which the KMT and their Communist successors recast as the name of the new unitary nation state. CCP propaganda troupes used Tibetan songs and dances to spread their messages, and traditional Tibetan opera was altered to reflect communist themes.[48] A variety of communist social and political organizations were created to replace traditional Tibetan ones, and 'nationalities institutes' were developed for teaching Tibetans socialist ideology, while Tibetan language was deemphasized and Tibetan culture was denigrated.[49]

The widespread, systematic and targeted nature of the violence and physical destruction prompted the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), a group of international legal scholars based in Geneva, to produce the first and second of its reports on Tibet during this period. The ICJ's 1959 report noted that: "Almost all the rights which together allow the full and legitimate expression of human personality appear to be denied to the Tibetans at the present time, and in most cases, for some time past. On the basis of the available evidence it would seem difficult to recall a case in which ruthless suppression of man's essential dignity has been more systematically and efficiently carried out."[50] This was a mere 15 years after the end of World War II. The ICJ, supported in the UN General Assembly by Malaya[51] and Thailand, called on the UN to investigate this contention. ICJ noted:

> *It is therefore the considered view of the International Commission of Jurists that the evidence points to:*
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> *(a) a prima facie case of acts contrary to Articles 2 (a) and (e) of the Genocide Convention of 1948;*
>
> *(b) a prima facie case of a systematic intention by such acts and other acts to destroy in whole or in part the Tibetans as a separate nation and the Buddhist religion of Tibet.*[52]

As part of the 1959 report, the ICJ established a Legal Inquiry Committee to look into existing evidence of genocide in Tibet. Findings of the committee released the following year noted that Chinese authorities "have systematically set out to eradicate this religious belief [Buddhism] in Tibet," and "in pursuit of this design they have killed religious figures because their religious belief and practice was an encouragement and example to others."[53] Moreover the ICJ found *prima facie* evidence that the People's Republic of China was committing acts of genocide in Tibet by attempting to destroy Tibetans as a religious group (but made only inconclusive findings regarding whether China intended to destroy Tibetans as a national or ethnic group).[54] Unfortunately, the ICJ's early reports and the UN's hortatory response were insufficient to compel the Chinese to allow a comprehensive investigation of the situation in Tibet. There would be no overt response from the international community and, for the Tibetans who were experiencing brutal treatment and attacks on the cultural markers of their distinct identity, there would be no relief to come as China withdrew from international scrutiny and entered into a period of darkness.

## The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

When the 10th Panchen Lama lamented to the PRC leadership in 1962 that "the future of religion has in reality been destroyed; therefore, in fact, religion has no future,"[55] he had no idea that the most intense period of repression of Tibetan Buddhism under Chinese rule had not yet begun. Shortly after he wrote those words, the Panchen Lama would become one of the earliest and most prominent victims of the decade of madness known as the Cultural Revolution. As with the earlier CCP campaigns, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution would begin with an effort by Mao and those around him to forge a rapid advance toward Communism. Where the focus in Tibet of 'democratic reforms' and the Great Leap Forward had been on the economy and the suppression of rebellion, the Cultural Revolution in Tibet was focused squarely on effecting Tibetans' cultural and political transformation. Nationally, it was launched out of a belief that the Great Leap had failed

because the population had not yet been socially and politically prepared for the 'leap' to Communism. Therefore, the Cultural Revolution would rid the people of their residual reactionary mindsets. Minorities were particularly targeted in Cultural Revolution campaigns because their so-called local nationalism epitomized the failure to achieve socialist consciousness. Minority cultural expressions were fully encapsulated within the 'four olds' (old ideas, culture, customs and habits) that Mao and his Red Guards sought to eradicate during the Cultural Revolution. If the socio-economic reforms of the previous fifteen years constituted a body blow to the ability of Tibetans to exert effective control over their own destiny, the intent of the Cultural Revolution was to eliminate Tibetan culture completely and replace it with something radically different.

The Cultural Revolution aimed to transform the PRC citizen into a new, modern 'socialist man.' In order to do this, Mao and his followers believed it was necessary to rid the people of the 'four olds:'

> *Those who held on to old values and traditions were said to possess a 'green brain,' while the progressive man had a normal 'white brain.' The new brain would be filled with the teachings of Chairman Mao. As food provided nourishment to the body, so the teachings of Mao would bring ideological transformation. It was said that without studying the Thoughts of the Chairman Mao, the brain would be empty.*[56]

In order to carry out this radical alteration of the psyche, Mao and his cohort felt they could not rely on the rank-and-file cadres, particularly since many of them were suspected of harboring 'reactionary' thoughts and were themselves often targets of this campaign. Mao therefore encouraged the formation of Red Guard groups, primarily students and young people, who were given broad extra-legal authority to carry out the objectives of the Cultural Revolution.

On August 25, 1966, less than a year after the PRC announced the formation of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), the Cultural Revolution was officially launched with a vicious attack on Tibet's holiest shrine, the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa.[57] Other major religious sites in Lhasa were also attacked, including the Ramoche Temple and the Norbulingka palace. Tibetan Red Guards participated under direction from their Chinese colleagues. Two days later, Red Guards from the TAR's teachers' training college put up posters and handed out leaflets ordering the eradication of 'feudal culture.' According to the leaflets, all books praising idealism and feudalism should be prohibited; all *mani* walls (made of stones engraved with prayers), prayer flags and incense burners should be destroyed; no one should recite prayers, circumambulate or prostrate; all monasteries and temples apart from those that are protected by the government should be converted for general public use; and monks and nuns should be allowed to marry and were required to engage in 'productive labor.'[58]

Every element of Tibetan culture was attacked during the Cultural Revolution, with religion coming under the most vigorous assault. Valuable contents of Tibet's great monasteries that had escaped the consequences of earlier 'democratic reforms' were now looted or destroyed, and millions of ancient and priceless manuscripts burnt. One eyewitness described how the smoke from the fires "in the sky of Lhasa blotted out the sun."[59] Sacred objects were taken away either for melting or to be sold to art dealers in black markets outside of China.[60] Ribhur Tulku writes: "during the Cultural Revolution, most of the Tibetan cultural artifacts were carted to China and destroyed. The statues and ritual objects of pure gold and silver were never seen again. Those of gilded copper, bell-metal, red copper, brass, etc., were ferried to Luyen, from where they were eventually sold to foundries…"[61] After it was ransacked, the Jokhang Temple was turned into an actual pigsty, and the desecrated Ramoche Temple was used as a meeting space for the North Lhasa Neighborhood Communist Party Committee.

One of the most damaging legacies of the early decades of Communist rule in Tibet was the death or flight into exile of many Tibetan Buddhist masters, and the consequent breakdown in the direct transmission of Buddhism from the old to the new generation. Starting from the 7th century, it took the Tibetan people more than 1,300 years to develop and sustain their unique form of Tibetan Buddhism that serves as the touchstone of Tibetan culture. It took the Chinese Communist Party only about 30 years after its 1949 invasion to nearly destroy Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet

through a sustained attack on the monastic system that nearly eliminated the ability for intergenerational transmission of the Dharma.

The foundational bond between spiritual master and student relies on the direct transmission of teachings within this relationship. This connection ensures the continuity of the true Dharma and its practice throughout the community. The murder, exile, forced ejection from monastic life, and imprisonment of so many lineage holders and teachers was incredibly disruptive to the process of transmitting the Buddhadharma in Tibet. Limitations on teaching time, and strict age and numerical limits on monks admitted into monasteries exacerbated the damage to Tibetan Buddhist scholarship.

Mani stones engraved with prayers and building stones from destroyed sacred shrines were desecrated through their redeployment as pavers for walkways, public toilets, and slaughterhouses. Monasteries were dismantled and their building materials repurposed as PLA barracks or CCP offices. Tibetans were forced to criticize the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama as reactionaries, and lurid depictions of epidemic human sacrifice and cannibalism under Lamaist rule were regular features of the propaganda against these and other religious leaders.

Tibetan homes were systematically searched and personal religious shrines destroyed. Tibetans were required to turn over personal cultural objects to the authorities. Tibetans were made to dress and wear their hair in the Chinese style, sing Chinese songs praising Mao, and cover up colorful Tibetan-style household decorations with drab proletariat colors.[62] They were even forced to turn in traditional brass and copper cooking pots, utensils and water pitchers on the pretext that they were old fashioned. "Prisoners were subjected to struggle sessions for even using spoons and wooden bowls. Using a traditional Tibetan belt earned public humiliation and beating."[63] Tibetan songs and operas were recast with revolutionary themes, including the operas of Mao's wife Jiang Qing.[64] As in China, Tibetans were forced to attend political meetings where they were exhorted to follow Mao Zedong Thought and denounce their own culture as backwards.

The price for resistance to the Cultural Revolution—or for just having the curse of a 'bad' class background—was humiliating, often violent struggle sessions, or worse. Not only were there no consequences for attacking persons with a bad class label, this was a path for Tibetans to demonstrate their loyalty to the PRC and earn advantages with the authorities. Senior lamas were subjected to a targeted campaign of humiliation and abuse. They were made to dress in their finest clothes, and then were paraded in the streets wearing dunce caps with signboards announcing their 'confessions' hung around their necks. Lamas and monks were jailed, forced into labor camps, and killed for their beliefs. Keutsang Tulku Jampel Yeshi, whose former incarnation led the search party that was responsible for identifying the present Dalai Lama, writes that in jail he was beaten, forced to undergo intense political education, and his monastery was destroyed and its students were either jailed or defrocked.[65] Palden Gyatso, a monk who was held in Drapchi prison, described the thamzing sessions where he and the other prisoners were forced to denounce the Dalai Lama:

> *We were ordered to trample on pictures of the Dalai Lama and to denounce him. We were also ordered to confess our guilt for involvement in reactionary activities. Some of us were made to sign confessions of guilt. Some people willingly signed; once, a person named Pema Thonden came forward and said, 'it is better to live a shorter life suffering so I would like to die and thank you for executing me.' Executions were normally done in groups of 18 to 20 people.*[66]

The Panchen Lama, who was under house arrest in Beijing at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, was taken from his home and subjected to a mass public thamzing session at the Minorities Nationalities Institute. The Red Guards labeled him a "reactionary slave-owner" and "the biggest parasite and blood-sucker" in Tibet.[67] He was then put into prison, often under solitary confinement, and remained there until 1977. Red Guards beat to death his fellow 'patriotic' Tibetan lama, Geshe Sherab Gyatso, one of the earliest and most enthusiastic lamas to support Communism, in 1968 at the age of 86.[68] The abbot of the Panchen Lama's main monastery, Tashilhunpo, was similarly murdered the following year.[69]

This systematic campaign of destruction was carried out across Tibet. In the tiny remote village of Riwoche, a monastery and 13-story religious shrine or *stupa* built by Thangtong Gyalpo, the 14th century Tibetan social reformer, were destroyed. Statues were broken down and scriptures burnt. Monks of the monastery were forced to throw the physical remains of Thangtong Gyalpo into the nearby *Yarlung Tsangpo* or Brahmaputra River.[70] At the end of the Cultural Revolution in Tibet, there were fewer than 1,000 monks in the eight monasteries that had not been destroyed.[71] The physical, intellectual and spiritual infrastructure of Tibetan Buddhism had been nearly eradicated.

In addition to religion and everyday customs, education and language were heavily targeted during the Cultural Revolution. This was a function of the role of students in the Cultural Revolution and the need for transmission of propaganda to the masses during this movement. The CCP education policy in Tibet was fundamentally shaped by its ideological viewpoint to stem any expression of Tibetan identity. In *Education in Tibet: Policy and Practice since 1950*, Catriona Bass writes that "during the Cultural Revolution, all concessions to culturally specific education for China's nationalities were abolished; the political nature of education during this period meant that it consisted almost entirely of launching attacks on the traditional Tibetan culture, the prime target being the Tibetan language."[72] Tibetan scholar, Muge Samten, who lived through the Cultural Revolution, wrote:

> *Almost all the universities and schools in Tibet were shut down, Tibetan language classes were banned, bits of Tibetan used in propaganda material were so-called 'reformed language' created in the name of destroying the 'four olds,' opposing the bourgeoisie and to be closer to 'people's language.' This 'reformed language' was devoid of standard Tibetan grammatical usage and was far removed from the colloquial language spoken by ordinary people. Anyone using the standard Tibetan language was attacked by having them branded as 'revisionists' and counter-revolutionary.*[73]

Tibetan nomads who were just starting to recover from the disastrous policies of the Great Leap Forward were again placed under central control and subject to radical settlement policies. Together with compulsory grain requisitions for the large and growing contingent of PLA troops present on the Tibetan plateau, a resumption of collectivization meant that food shortages reappeared by late 1968.[74] Once again, under tremendous cultural pressure, Tibetans revolted. The revolt began in a rural area west of Lhasa called Nyemo, and was led by a nun, Thinley Choeden, who claimed she was guided by visions of the Dalai Lama and Chairman Mao. Nyemo had been the scene of intense factional fighting within the Red Guards, and at first the revolt was seen in those terms because its participants started by attacking Chinese and Tibetan cadres at the county offices. As the role of Thinley Choeden and her Tibetan followers became more pronounced, the authorities began to characterize the situation around Nyemo as a Tibetan nationalist revolt. Later scholars have, however, pronounced it less a conscious nationalist uprising than "a cultural response to the chaos of the Cultural Revolution."[75] Eventually the Nyemo Revolt spread to twenty counties in the TAR and the PLA was called in to put it down. The revolt ended with the public execution of its leaders in Lhasa by the PLA.[76]

One scholar has suggested that the decision of the Chinese to cast the Nyemo Revolt in Tibetan nationalist terms made it possible to turn the uprising into a scapegoat around which all Chinese, in Tibet and otherwise, could rally.[77] At about the same time as the Nyemo Revolt, the Chinese launched a new Anti-Rightist Rectification Campaign. In Tibet, this campaign was aimed at Tibetan cadres and students who had been sent back to Tibet from studying in China before the Cultural Revolution,[78] as well as Tibetans who joined the Red Guards. When Mao finally decided that the factionalism and wanton destruction of the Red Guards was impeding the progress of the Cultural Revolution throughout China, he used the PLA to suppress them. While this violent process was nearly completed in the Chinese interior by the end of 1968, the suppression took much longer in Tibet and it was 1970 before the PLA regained control in some areas. The effort to reestablish governance and rebuild the institutions of Central Party rule in Tibet took slightly longer.

Although the most chaotic and violent period of the Cultural Revolution ended for Tibetans in 1970, the leftist campaign against Tibetan culture continued for several more

years. Religious practice of any kind—even personal rituals—remained totally banned, and the authorities launched renewed campaigns denouncing the Dalai Lama. The cult of Mao remained in effect, and basic expressions of cultural distinctiveness—clothing, hairstyles, jewelry, architecture, etc.—were still forbidden in favor of unitary proletarian culture. Political meetings still consumed all available time and featured heavy doses of class struggle and self-criticism. Collectivization continued for much of the decade, except for a brief period of liberalization in 1972, and the commune system was found to be an effective tool for assimilation of Tibetans into communist ideology. In reality, post-Mao liberalization did not effectively reach Tibet until 1979, three years after the death of Mao, with the visit of Hu Yaobang.

By stripping away Tibetan culture in all its forms from the Tibetan people, denigrating it as undesirable and making it practically unavailable, the Chinese Communist state had effectively imposed its cultural imprint on a distinctive ethnic group. In the context of this comprehensive assault, many Tibetans chose to strategically conceal their devotion and cultural preferences behind an outward mask of compliance with Chinese mandates. In doing so, they managed to preserve key elements of their culture and were able to vigorously reassert it as soon as they were given even a modicum of space to do so.

## THE REFORM AND POST-REFORM ERAS

When the Cultural Revolution ended in September 1976, Tibetan Buddhism inside Tibet lay in ruins and Tibetan cultural expression had virtually disappeared underground. While the mass brutality and wholesale destruction of monastic institutions that characterized the Mao era essentially ended with his death and the purge of the 'Gang of Four,' the Chinese state continued its assault on Tibetan culture via different means. During the 'reform era,' the Chinese leadership employed a range of policies and practices that, while less outwardly violent and aggressive, were nonetheless rooted in the same state building, assimilationist imperatives and underlying ideologies of the Mao era. Tibetans had learned hard lessons from the first three decades of Chinese rule and found that Chinese promises of autonomy were little more than a pretext for the projection of the CCP's power into Tibet.

After the death of Mao in 1976, China entered a period of relative economic and political liberalization under Deng Xiaoping and Communist Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang. In 1978, China released a number of Tibetan prisoners, loosened travel restrictions for Tibetans and invited a group of exiles to visit Tibet. This initial group was followed by an invitation for the Dalai Lama to send his own fact-finding missions to Tibet in 1979–80. The Chinese authorities were stunned by the Tibetans' response to these delegations: the authorities had initially been concerned that the now-socialist Tibetans would attack their old 'class enemies,' but instead large enthusiastic crowds turned out to greet the visitors wherever they went—prostrating and clamoring to be near anyone connected to the Dalai Lama. Likewise, the Chinese had expected the Tibetan visitors to be impressed by all the changes in Tibet since 1959; instead, their visitors were horrified to find desperate poverty and cultural devastation on a massive scale.

Following the 1980 Tibet work conference, Chinese leader Hu Yaobang made an unprecedented fact-finding visit of his own to Tibet in May 1980. Despite having seen the reports of the exile delegations, as well as preparatory work from their own government, Hu and his team were reportedly dismayed to find the situation in Tibet worse than they imagined.[81] At a major conference of Tibetan and Chinese cadres in Lhasa, Hu was frank about the Party's failure to improve the conditions of the Tibetan people:

> *Our present situation is less than wonderful because the Tibetan people's lives have not been much improved… In some areas the living standards have even gone down. We comrades in the Central Committee…were very upset when we heard about this situation… We have worked nearly thirty years, but the life of the Tibetan people has not been notably improved. Are we not to blame?*[82]

It was a stunning admission of failure coming from a Chinese Communist leader, and Hu's private communications to Party cadres were reportedly even more scathing.[83]

## Tibetan Red Guards

Tibetans did participate in the destruction of the Cultural Revolution as Red Guards.[79] They were mostly young people, including a number of Tibetan students who had been educated at nationalities universities in China and returned to Tibet with Chinese Red Guards to launch the Cultural Revolution. In response to a 1998 essay by the Chinese writer Wang Lixiong that noted Tibetans' participation in their own cultural destruction, Tibetan scholar Tsering Shakya wrote:

> *It is true that Tibetans played an active part in the Cultural Revolution, and this fact cannot be wiped out of history. It should, however, be put into proper perspective, and the actual nature of their participation subjected to examination…Tibet was swept up in the fervor of the times, just like the rest of China; many did go on to destroy religious buildings, to denounce friends and neighbors as reactionaries, or to revolt against their teachers…the Party allowed no other option. The brave few who refused to participate in the madness paid the price of being branded as enemies of the people and subjected to mass-struggle sessions. Only the crudest notion of freedom could suggest that such participation was a 'choice' for the ordinary men and women of the time… Far from being a period of mindless chaos, the Cultural Revolution was a carefully orchestrated affair in Tibet, and the Party was always in control… The result was that, in most rural areas of Tibet, the ferocity of the Cultural Revolution was shifted away from the battle between the two factions and directed instead towards an attack on tradition… In this effort, no stone was left unturned.*

Turning to the characterization of Tibetans as submissive in the face of the Cultural Revolution, Shakya notes:

> *In fact, it was a young Tibetan, the Panchen Rinpoche, who put forward by far the most extensive critique of Mao's policies of communization and the Great Leap Forward—when millions of Chinese apparently accepted that melting down their household utensils would enable them to overtake Britain in steel production. Similarly, it was the people of eastern Tibet who staged the most extensive revolt in China against the imposition of the People's Communes. This hardly suggests a subservient people, taking Mao into their hearts.*
>
> *If the Tibetans really found this behavior (of Mao worship) as emotionally gratifying as Wang suggests, we would have to ask why they discarded it as soon as they had the opportunity to do so. The fact that, the instant it was permitted, Tibetans not only shook off the uniforms of the Cultural Revolution but pulled down the red banners and hoisted prayer flags in the valleys, discarded the Chairman's 'Thoughts' and brought out their long-hidden prayer books, restored their native gods to their altars and sent thousands of young people to join the monasteries, hardly supports the notion that Maoist rituals were psychologically irresistible to them. It rather suggests that, given the choice, Tibetans will prefer their own religion.*
>
> *In other words, the outward display of compliance concealed strongly held values and strategic decisions.*[80]

Others have made the comparison to the fact that there were Jews who worked in the extermination machinery of the Nazi concentration camps, but this does not make the facts of the Holocaust any less real or compelling. Following subsequent communications with the Dalai Lama and Tibetan intellectuals, and the banning of his Tibetan wife's publications by the Chinese government, Wang Lixiong has written some of the most nuanced and articulate critiques of Chinese policies in Tibet by a current Chinese writer. He continues to be at the vanguard of efforts to develop a constructive dialogue between Chinese and Tibetan scholars, and he and Tsering Shakya are now close collaborators.

This realistic assessment was reflected in a new 'six-point plan' that called for full regional autonomy in the TAR so that Tibetans would "really be the masters of their own lives."[84] It included various economic provisions, including: an exemption for Tibetans from taxes for a period of three years "to allow the Tibetan people a chance to recover;" promises of an economic policy suited to Tibet's special characteristics, including a reversal of communization, contribution of a greater share of the state subsidy to agriculture and animal husbandry; development of capacity to "manufacture consumer goods;" and implementation of market reforms that were already underway in China, "in line with Tibetan circumstances."[85] The plan also pledged improvements to Tibetan science, culture, language and education; and full implementation of "the Party's policy on minority cadres" to allow for the withdrawal of "a large quantity" of the Chinese cadres based in Tibet.[86]

The authorities allowed many destroyed and damaged monasteries to be rebuilt and repaired, and permitted the resumption of religious practices. Monks returned to the monasteries in droves, and Tibetans were once again allowed to possess pictures of the Dalai Lama. Tibet was opened to tourism and international trade, which strengthened the economy. Signs were changed to Tibetan language in public buildings and shops, and official business was also conducted in the Tibetan language. The number of Chinese cadres in Tibet began to fall,[87] and the TAR had its first and only non-Han Party Secretary, Wu Jinghua of the Yi minority.

However, this liberalization was subject to key limitations that ensured it was short-lived and ultimately resulted in deepened mistrust on both sides. While Tibetan culture could be strengthened, and the government was intended to have a more Tibetan face, Tibet would continue to be ruled under the 'unified leadership' of the Chinese Communist Party. The decisions about what was permissible cultural activity were still made by the CCP, not the Tibetans themselves, and the CCP remained unwilling to allow the Tibetans the full level of cultural expression they sought—particularly in the area of religion. While many monasteries had resumed functioning as centers of faith and learning, there were still limitations, such as on the number of monks permitted, and the sangha was still viewed with suspicion by the authorities. Because fewer of the hardcore 'leftists' were purged in the TAR and other Tibetan areas after the Cultural Revolution, they remained in prominent positions in the government and Party apparatus. Their suspicions continued to heavily influence policy development and implementation despite the more liberal leadership at the central level, further reinforcing the sense among Tibetans that the liberalization had particularly shallow roots.[88]

In addition, while the more open economic approach was initially beneficial to Tibetans after years of collectivization, it ultimately had severe consequences for many of them. 'Opening' Tibet essentially meant further integration into the Chinese economy. While some Han cadres were withdrawn and replaced by Tibetans, at the grassroots level the 'open door' policy announced at the Second Work Forum (1984) meant that large numbers of 'unofficial' non-Tibetans flooded into Lhasa and other relatively urban areas of Tibet, drawn by the massive economic stimulus underway. In May 1984, Radio Beijing reported that, "Over 60,000 workers, representing the vanguard groups to help in the construction work in the TAR, are arriving in Tibet daily and have started their preliminary work. They will be helping in the electricity department, schools, hotels, cultural institutions and construction of mills and factories."[89] Another 60,000 Chinese workers, mainly from Sichuan Province, arrived in the TAR in the summer of 1985, while the number of Chinese civilian residents of Lhasa went from between 50,000–60,000 to over 100,000 within three years.[90]

This situation reached such a critical point that for a time in 1984 the TAR Party Secretary suspended the in-migration of Chinese, but this directive was soon overwhelmed by the demand for Chinese laborers.[91] As Han and Hui construction workers settled in Tibet, tertiary businesses sprung up to serve their communities. In those areas where Tibetans did manage to succeed, such as when prices for wool rose, the state would intervene and force Tibetans to sell a quota of their product at below-market prices.[92] Moreover, the Chinese authorities continued to view Tibetans' economic activity as relatively unproductive because profits or surplus were invested in religious activities rather than marketable goods or expansion. Because the Tibetan economy

remained underdeveloped at the same time the state was ramping up large infrastructure projects and other massive spending, a large steady stream of subsidies from the central government and other provinces was required to finance budgetary outlays, leading to a cycle of dependency. As a result of these factors, many Tibetans viewed the state-led investment in the economy "as a kind of cultural leveling, eroding Tibetan language and culture."[93]

Tibetans' feelings of frustration and suspicion toward Chinese policies came to a head in 1987. Hu Yaobang's resignation that year signaled a split within the Chinese leadership about the reforms that were underway in both China and Tibet. That year, Lhasa was rocked by protests that started as peaceful but rapidly degenerated after the authorities beat the monks that initiated them. Larger and more sustained protests shook Lhasa in 1988 and 1989. As in 1987, the protests in 1988 and 1989 were met with brutality. During the March 5, 1988 demonstrations, police savagely attacked a group of monks inside the Jokhang Temple, beating several to death and arresting others.[94] Torture of prisoners—repeated beatings, electric shocks, suspension from ropes, exposure to extreme cold, sleep deprivation and attacks by dogs—was accompanied by repeated interrogations and political education sessions.[95] Tibetan Buddhist nuns who were arrested for protesting received some of the most brutal treatment.[96]

Following another round of large-scale protests in March 1989, Hu Jintao, who was then the Party boss in Tibet, presided over the imposition of martial law in Lhasa for the first time in the history of the PRC, and it remained in place until May 1990.[97] The PLA assumed direct responsibility for maintaining order in Lhasa, and Tibetans were given long prison sentences for 'counter-revolutionary' offenses. Earlier that year the 10th Panchen Lama suddenly died only a week after he publicly declared that Tibet had suffered more than it had gained from 30 years of CCP rule.[98] Of more immediate concern to the PRC leadership, however, were the massive Chinese student-led pro-democracy protests that had occupied Tiananmen Square in Beijing for several months and were spreading to cities throughout China. Zhao Ziyang, the liberal prime minister who advocated dialogue with the students and who supported Hu Yaobang's Tibet liberalization policy, was placed under house arrest and the conservatives in the leadership closed ranks under Deng Xiaoping. On May 20, 1989 the Chinese leadership imposed martial law on the Beijing Municipality and on June 4 the Chinese army was deployed against the Tiananmen protestors.

## Assault on the 'Dalai Clique'

With the conservatives again firmly in charge in Beijing, the leadership's attitude and policy on Tibet hardened dramatically. In response to the ongoing protests in Tibet, the Public Security Bureau restarted and increased the mandatory political education sessions in all work units and residential compounds, during which Tibetans were encouraged to inform on anyone participating in 'resistance activities,' denounce the 'Dalai clique,' and express their loyalty to China and the CCP.[99] Monasteries were the first and most rigorously monitored locations of these study sessions, and special work teams were formed to scrutinize monasteries and identify dissidents. Directives issued in November 1989 instructed monastery work teams:

> *First, to continue to resist the splittists and the 'Dalai clique;' secondly, to condemn and campaign against the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the Dalai Lama; thirdly, to continue to identify participants in the successive demonstrations since 1987 at the monasteries and their supporters, particularly those who did not actively participate, and to expel unregistered monks; and fourthly, to go even to small monasteries and nunneries looking for splittists.*[100]

The state also instituted an identity card system and more pro-active policing methods, both of which allowed for greater, more sophisticated social control of Tibetans.[101] These were systematic, state-led activities that could not be written off as the actions of rogue elements consumed with revolutionary fervor. The massive military parade in Lhasa that marked the one-year anniversary of martial law mocked the Chinese government's contention that the three previous years of protests were the result of a few isolated malcontents, and broadly reinforced the perception that China's presence in Tibet was tantamount to military occupation.

As security methods became more sophisticated, they were combined with the vigorous promotion of rapid economic growth. When Chen Kuiyuan became TAR Party Secretary in 1992, he was an enthusiastic proponent of this policy of 'grasping with both hands,' and added his own particular spin in an effort to rush development: incentives to Han and Hui petty urban traders and entrepreneurs, accomplished through policies that encouraged heavy migration of such traders to urban areas of the TAR. Before his arrival in the TAR, Chen had published an article calling for the return of 'ideology and class' to the forefront of nationality policy.[102] His approach was akin to the Cultural Revolution-era argument that there was no space to consider 'special characteristics' of Tibetans' culture or way of life in the headlong rush toward economic development. By 1994, Chen was openly arguing in favor of a policy of bringing large numbers of Chinese settlers to Tibet to both stimulate economic growth and accomplish security goals.[103]

This policy orientation of economic development as an essential element of security work was cemented with the directives that came out of the Third Tibet Work Forum held in 1994. In September 1994, the TAR Party Standing Committee followed up on the Work Forum with new instructions for "cutting off the serpent's head" through encouraged Chinese migration into Tibet, closing of monasteries, intensified political education, and punishment for people who sing so-called counterrevolutionary songs.[104] The Work Forum and succeeding policy iterations emphasized accelerated economic development, especially in the industrial sector, and cracking down mercilessly on Tibetan 'nationalists.' Spurred on by Chen's zealous rhetoric on the subject, the hardliners in Beijing considered Tibetan separatism the major cause of instability in Tibet and an "anti-splittist campaign" was launched to root it out, including an unprecedented denunciation campaign that was directed against the Dalai Lama personally. This decision reflected a view in Beijing that it was necessary to eliminate not only the Dalai Lama's political influence in Tibet but also his religious influence. The Chinese authorities once again focused political campaigns on key aspects of Tibetan culture: religion, language and education. These political campaigns, combined with a development model that was rapidly and dramatically altering the economic, demographic and environmental profile of the Tibetan plateau, served to again push Tibetans and their culture to the brink.

Since 1987, the authorities had placed additional restrictions on Tibetan Buddhist monasteries intended to undercut their influence in Tibetan society. The 'Democratic Management Committees' (DMCs) and work teams in the monasteries had responsibility for ensuring that monks and nuns did not cause trouble, and that they were provided with correct political guidance. In implementing the anti-religion dictates of the Third Work Forum (1994), TAR officials noted their concerns that "there are too many places where monasteries have been opened without permission from the authorities, and having too much religious activity…the waste of materials, manpower and money has been tremendous…sometimes leading to interference in administration, low education, marriage, birth control and daily life…" and they called for additional political education to help "draw a clear line of demarcation with the 'Dalai clique.'" [105]

By the fall of 1994, the authorities were vigorously attacking the Dalai Lama. They barred the display of his image in official places and homes of government employees and confiscated them from public markets in Lhasa. Internally, the Party used highly loaded rhetoric, saying the Dalai Lama had essentially defected from religion to become "a tool of international hostile forces."[106] This rhetoric went public in January 1995, when newspapers began to carry lengthy denunciations that attacked the Dalai Lama's religious standing.

At this same time, the search for the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama had been underway for nearly six years and was coming to a close. After the 10th Panchen Lama's death in 1989, CCP authorities had immediately grasped the importance of controlling the search, selection and recognition of the 11th Panchen Lama. They announced a seven-point plan for the process, elements of which were consistent with traditional Tibetan practices, but importantly they insisted that the selection would be made by means of the 'golden urn'[107] lottery and subject to final state approval. The PRC government began to propagandize that the selection of the Panchen Lama and Dalai Lama rein-

carnates had always been the prerogative of prior imperial Chinese governments and would be so now.[108] Soon after the 10th Panchen Lama's funeral, Chinese Premier Li Peng announced that 'outsiders,' i.e. exile Tibetans, including the Dalai Lama, would not be permitted to 'meddle in the selection procedure.'[109]

The monks of Tashilhunpo Monastery, the seat of the Panchen Lamas, were placed in an untenable position. In the case of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, there was historically a pattern of mutual recognition of their reincarnations and subsequent religious educations—the so-called 'sun and moon' relationship.[110] The Dalai Lama made clear his view that it was his sole prerogative to recognize the Panchen Lama's reincarnation and that this was a spiritual matter beyond the reach of the PRC government. The abbot of Tashilhunpo Monastery and head of its DMC, Chadrel Rinpoche, was placed in charge of the search committee. The monks of Tashilhunpo had publicly demanded that the Dalai Lama be the final arbiter regarding the Panchen Lama's reincarnation and knew his approval was essential for the Tibetan people to accept the legitimacy of the selection, but they were in a weak position to resist Beijing's will.

Chadrel Rinpoche tried to bridge the unbridgeable: his religious responsibility to honor the Dalai Lama's role in the selection process, and his political constraints as Chinese authorities became increasingly hostile to the Dalai Lama. He used every tool at his disposal to get the Chinese to relent on the issue of the Dalai Lama's role in the process. At one point, he even threatened to quit and disband his team if they insisted that the Dalai Lama could not be consulted.[111] While they did not assent, the Chinese did seem to back off on their insistence that the Dalai Lama have no role. In the end, however, except for one brief meeting between the Dalai Lama's brother Gyalo Thondup and Chadrel Rinpoche, the Chinese authorities refused all entreaties from the Dalai Lama and ultimately insisted he had no role in the process. Nonetheless, Chadrel Rinpoche managed to send surreptitious updates on the search to the Dalai Lama and receive instructions from him. As the process narrowed throughout 1994 and settled on a single boy, Chinese-Tibetan relations deteriorated further. The situation came to a head as the 1994 Work Forum signaled Beijing had decided that extermination of the Dalai Lama's influence in Tibet was in its best interests.

Chadrel Rinpoche's last message to the Dalai Lama arrived in January 1995 and contained information about the various candidates, as well as the evidence the Rinpoche saw as pointing toward one candidate in particular: a six-year-old boy from the remote area of Nagchu in central Tibet, Gedun Choekyi Nyima. After he reviewed the materials and performed the necessary rituals, the Dalai Lama recognized Gedun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th Panchen Lama. He sent a secret message to Chadrel Rinpoche, who received it but was unable to respond. Chadrel Rinpoche was fighting a losing battle with the Chinese authorities and their loyalists on the search committee to avoid the golden urn lottery and confirm Gedun Choekyi Nyima. After several months of fruitless effort to communicate with Chadrel Rinpoche, the Dalai Lama announced on May 14, 1995, that the eleventh reincarnation of the Panchen Lama had been found.

Within three days, Chadrel Rinpoche disappeared along with around 30 colleagues involved in the reincarnation search. They were subjected to beatings and other torture during interrogation, and Chadrel Rinpoche was later sentenced to six years imprisonment for 'leaking state secrets' and 'splitting the country.' Tashilhunpo Monastery was placed under lockdown after the monks there broke into open revolt. Throwing aside any pretext of religious freedom in Tibet, the Chinese government proclaimed the Dalai Lama's choice "illegal" and its official *Xinhua* news agency denounced six-year-old Gedun Choekyi Nyima for having "once drowned a dog."[112] Gedun Choekyi Nyima and his family disappeared into Chinese custody, and have not been seen since despite numerous inquiries from the international community, including the UN Committee of the Rights of the Child, about his welfare. The PRC authorities subsequently installed their own Panchen Lama, a five-year-old boy named Gyaltsen Norbu whose parents were both Party members, in a hastily organized ceremony that involved drawing out ivory pieces from a golden urn and featured a heavy presence of CCP officials and rows of sullen monks.[113] According to Arjia Rinpoche, present at

the ceremony, Gyaltsen Norbu's selection was a foregone conclusion. After the ceremony, a Chinese official accompanying Arjia Rinpoche back to Beijing "unwittingly revealed a shocking secret: …'When we made our selection we left nothing to chance. In the silk pouches of the ivory pieces we put a bit of cotton at the bottom of one of them, so it would be a little higher than the others and the right candidate would be chosen.'"[114] Tibetans typically refer to Gyaltsen Norbu, the boy chosen by Beijing, as 'Panchen Zuma' (fake Panchen) or 'Gya Panchen' (Chinese Panchen). Most Tibetans still do not accept him as legitimate. Chadrel Rinpoche was released from prison in 2002, after nearly seven years spent mostly in isolation, and his present status and whereabouts are unknown.

Even before the conflagration over the Panchen Lama's reincarnation, the Party had been steadily escalating the rhetoric against the Dalai Lama and taking steps to curb the practice of Tibetan Buddhism. State media described him as, "a naked anti-China tool who has bartered away his honor for Western hostile forces' patronage."[115] On February 15, 1996, China's *Tibet Daily* published a statement by Tibet's Commission of Nationalities and Religious Affairs asserting that: "We must close the doors of the lamaseries which have serious problems or where political problems often occur for overhauling and consolidation and set a time limit for correction."[116] The authorities subsequently closed several monasteries and nunneries. Later that year, the authorities announced that the ongoing campaign against what they considered 'excess' religion in Tibet would potentially continue for three to five years. Reuters quoted a Chinese propaganda official as saying, "Lamas who are comparatively reactionary will be told to return to secular life… Reorganization of monasteries will consist mainly of ideological education."[117]

The Third Work Forum in 1994 also led to renewed prohibitions on the possession by Tibetan cadres of Dalai Lama photographs and other religious symbols. The extent of the application of the ban and to whom it should be applied was ambiguous and implementation was erratic; partially in order to increase its intimidating effect. But in principle the display of the Dalai Lama's picture was not permitted in any government office although they were still kept in private homes. Around this time it seemed that Chinese officials at the national and provincial levels sometimes made a theoretical distinction between political and religious application of images of the Dalai Lama, by maintaining that an individual possessing a photo of the Dalai Lama for the purpose of worshipping him as a religious figure was acceptable. However, the distinction was never clear and always remained open to the interpretation of authorities.

The *Tibet Daily* also called for the gradual introduction of a ban on Dalai Lama photographs in monasteries along with political education that "should convince and educate the large numbers of monks and ordinary religious believers that the Dalai [sic] is no longer a religious leader who can bring happiness to the masses, but a guilty person of the motherland and people."[118] The authorities then launched a new campaign of patriotic education in all monasteries that involved work teams physically searching for and removing the Dalai Lama's photo, and required monks and nuns to sign individual written pledges denouncing the Dalai Lama. Hundreds of monks and nuns were expelled from monasteries for refusing to sign the denunciations and were imprisoned or fled to exile in India. Protests broke out at monasteries, and at least one monk at Ganden Monastery was reportedly killed when troops were called in to put down protests after the authorities tried to remove the Dalai Lama's photograph.[119]

It also became obligatory for some religious institutions in Tibet to display photos of the Chinese-chosen Panchen Lama, Gyaltsen Norbu, although monks often ignored these instructions. When Chinese authorities attempted to install Gyaltsen Norbu at Kumbum Monastery in 1998 because they were concerned he would not be safe at Tashilhunpo, its abbot Arjia Rinpoche defected to the United States rather than accede to their demands. His defection was followed in January 2000 by the daring escape from Tibet and arrival in India of another important lama, the 17$^{th}$ Karmapa Ugyen Trinley Dorje.

## Chinese Assumptions and the Karmapa

Perhaps no other personal story better encapsulates Tibet's modern struggle against cultural assimilation than that of the Karmapa. Born in Tibet in 1985, he was confirmed by the Dalai Lama who stated that he had experienced a dream indicating precisely the place where the 16th Karmapa would be reborn. The Dalai Lama's recognition of the Karmapa was not challenged by the Chinese authorities who allowed his enthronement at Tsurphu Monastery, the traditional seat of the Karmapas in Tibet. He was even permitted to travel to Lhasa and attend the celebration of his enthronement at the Jokhang Temple, where he received gifts sent by the Dalai Lama from exile. The young Karmapa completed his basic studies at Tsurphu without major interference by the Chinese government, and thousands of Tibetan pilgrims traveled to receive his blessings and empowerments. The Chinese authorities provided certain accommodations to the young Karmapa and his monks at Tsurphu, with the expectation that he could be groomed as a 'patriotic' lama.

Chinese assumptions that official prestige and economic privileges would be sufficient to buy his loyalty were reversed when in the winter of 1999 the Karmapa eluded his Chinese minders and escaped over the Himalayas to exile in India. From exile, the Karmapa cited his inability to receive direct teachings from senior lamas that were essential to his role as the holder of the Karma Kargyu lineage as the reason he fled Tibet.[120] He explained in an interview with the International Campaign for Tibet in 2002:

> *I have inherited an historic and religious responsibility, and it is my duty to uphold it. Therefore, as a young monk, I need to receive teachings from older teachers in my lineage in order to fulfill my duty. Specifically, this means that I need to receive the tantric initiation, the oral transmissions of texts, and the explanation of meditation techniques… I tried for many years to secure invitations for my teachers who reside outside of Tibet. This failed and thus my religious education was failing…so I left Tibet.*[121]

In Tibet, Chen Kuiyuan, the TAR Party Secretary, continued to implement a policy of religious repression. Political dissent was dealt with under the accelerated procedures of an ongoing "Strike Hard campaign" that was ostensibly aimed at reducing crime. In 1996, 1,173 Tibetans were tried for 'severely threatening public order' and another 97 on charges of 'endangering state security,' 29 of whom were executed.[122] In 1997, Chen Kuiyuan implemented secret regulations requiring that all government officials, including drivers and janitors, and their immediate families, as well as all students and schoolchildren, should stop practicing religion.[123] China's open attacks on the Dalai Lama were supported by more subtle efforts to fan sectarian rivalries by portraying the Dalai Lama as a strictly Gelugpa figure who had no authority with other schools of Tibetan Buddhism and by supporting the propitiation of a controversial spirit, Dorje Shugden, whose worship the Dalai Lama discouraged. The propitiation of spirits as the manifestations of enlightened beings is not uncommon in the practice of Tibetan Buddhism, and the Chinese authorities have exploited an ancient controversy surrounding the veneration of one of these spirits, Dorje Shugden, in an effort to undermine the authority of the Dalai Lama and create divisions among Tibetans.[124] This controversy dates back to the 17th century and the time of the 5th Dalai Lama, but it was re-energized when the current Dalai Lama renounced his own Shugden practice in 1975 and strongly discouraged others from "propitiating the fierce spirit known as Dolgyal (Shugden)"[125] as a potentially degenerative practice within Tibetan Buddhism that threatens the promotion of inter-sectarian tolerance and unity among Tibetans.

In February 1997 three Tibetan monks, including a confidant of the Dalai Lama who had spoken publicly against the propitiation of Shugden, were murdered in what appeared to be ritualistic fashion near the Dalai Lama's residence in Dharamsala, India. There were credible allegations that the murderers were associated with a Dorje Shugden group, although they were never apprehended and were said to have crossed the border to Nepal and then presumably fled to Tibet.

In a 2005 paper, Australian scholar Ben Hillman described the divisive results of the Shugden dispute in one unnamed monastery in eastern Tibet where he did extensive research on the relationship between the monastic community and the local authorities. He cites the monks there as being convinced that the Chinese authorities were behind efforts to promote a pro-Shugden faction in the monastery:

> *Evidence of local government favoritism toward the pro-Shugden faction began to emerge at S Monastery in 2003 when monks applied for permission to undertake studies in India. Despite equal numbers of applications from all khangtsens [ed: residential units within monasteries], of the 12 monks who were issued travel documents, only one was from an anti-Shugden khangtsen. Similarly, in 2004, one of the monastery's smallest and (previously) poorest khangtsens began to build an elaborate new prayer room and residence for its handful of members. Financial support had been obtained from Beijing through a network of pro-Shugden lamas with access to officials at the highest level… As the monastery grew, conflicts between the factions emerged with greater frequency and intensity.*[126]

## Indoctrination through Education and Language

Closely related to his harsh approach on religion, Chen Kuiyuan was convinced that education and other aspects of Tibetan intellectual culture were tools the Party should use to manage the Tibetan population. In an October 1994 speech on education, Chen announced that ideological goals were the top priority in TAR schools:

> *The success of our education does not lie in the number of diplomas issued to graduates from universities, colleges, polytechnic schools and middle schools. In the final analysis, in whether our graduating students are opposed to or turn their hearts to the Dalai clique and in whether they are loyal to or do not care about our great motherland and the great socialist cause… [S]chools are not a forum on freedom. Schools should be captured by socialism. We should not allow the splittist elements and religious idealism to use the classrooms to poison people's sons and daughters… Scriptures have entered some schools and become textbooks in the classrooms. Some students have joined the ranks of monks. Some people purposely interpret this phenomenon as a national feature in an attempt to legalize religious interference in educational affairs… Therefore, we have arduous tasks in political and ideological work as well as heavy responsibilities in training constructors (sic) and successors who possess deep love for the Motherland and socialist undertakings.*[127]

Under the education policy implemented by Chen, not only was the curriculum packed with ideological content but he also suggested discarding subjects such as science and technical studies. Experimental Tibetan-medium classes in four secondary schools that had been started by the 10th Panchen Lama before his death were shut down.[128] In its 1997 report on Tibet, the International Commission of Jurists wrote:

> *Rather than instilling in Tibetan children respect for their own cultural identity, language and values, as required under the Convention [on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination], education in Tibet serves to ideologically indoctrinate Tibetan children and to convey a sense of inferiority of their own culture, religion and language in comparison with the dominant Chinese culture and values."*[129]

In January 1996, Chen reportedly told an internal Party meeting that Tibetan nationalism was rooted in Tibetan religion, and that Tibetan religion was rooted in Tibetan culture and language.[130] One year later, he attacked these links in an infamous speech lambasting those who sug-

gested Tibetan Buddhism was integral to Tibetan culture, labeling them "separatists" who "go all out to put religion above the Tibetan culture and attempt to use the spoken language and culture to cause disputes and antagonism between the nationalities."[131] Subsequently, Tibetan scholars were told their priority was to attack 'the Dalai' and his followers. Chen's attacks on Tibetan scholars and intellectuals and his efforts to cleave Tibetan Buddhism from Tibetan culture amounted to a radical escalation of the party-state's assault on Tibetan culture because it implied that Tibetan language and other aspects of the culture had to be controlled as closely as Tibetan Buddhism.[132]

## Economic and Demographic Policies

These specific attacks on Tibetan culture were augmented by economic and demographic policies that served to exacerbate cultural pressures in Tibet. Beyond the aforementioned effort by Chen Kuiyuan to attract petty traders into Tibet, the Chinese state set forth a very specific economic agenda that was inexorably linked with its internal security concerns within Tibet and its border with India. The resulting population influx into Tibetan areas has transformed Tibetan communities in fundamental ways. In addition to the rapid, state-led economic development policies that encouraged the arrival of large numbers of Chinese migrants, the forced settlement of nomads has had significant social and cultural implications for Tibetans.

The influx of Chinese settlers accelerated in the early 1990s due to Deng Xiaoping's personal encouragement that Chinese "comrades" migrate into Tibet to "impart scientific and technological know-how and share their scientific expertise."[133] Under various guises, such as 'reducing the gap between the eastern provinces and western regions,' the Chinese state embraced population transfer from China to Tibet. Chen Kuiyuan advocated setting up a framework to encourage extensive Chinese migration, urging that, "[w]e should open Tibet wider to the outside… and open our job market to all fellow countrymen."[134] In January 1991, China's national weekly news magazine, *Beijing Review*, reported that about 300,000 workers were prepared to join the new construction projects in the TAR.[135] In Lhokha (Chinese: Shannan) approximately 28,000 Chinese settlers arrived between 1987 and 1992, and 43,860 arrived in Nagchu in the same period.[136] Mao Rubai, vice-chairman of the TAR government (1986–1993) was quoted as saying in September 1988 that apart from the PLA soldiers and other military personnel stationed in the autonomous region there were one million new Chinese settlers in the TAR.[137]

These economic projects and initiatives were further stepped up after the Third Work Forum on Tibet in 1994, which emphasized policies to assimilate Tibet into the Chinese economic mainstream. The major thrust of the strategy was "to open Tibet's door wide to inner parts of the country and encourage traders, investments, economic units and individuals from China to Central Tibet to run different sorts of enterprises."[138] New development programs for Tibet were put forward, such as the plan to turn the Lhasa-Shigatse-Tsethang triangle into a breadbasket for export to China.[139]

Elsewhere in Tibet, mining, logging and commercial animal husbandry of pigs, ducks and chickens for the Chinese market were intensified. Massive infrastructure projects, including the construction of highways, airports, railroads, and dams encouraged laborers from neighboring provinces to flock into Tibet. This influx of Chinese migrant workers left basic commodities in short supply, and prices shot up. The contrast between Tibet's opening to China, and its relative inaccessibility for westerners during this period prompted one high-level Tibetan to remark, "There is a little door and a big door. The little door opens to the outside world, and the big door opens to China… The big door will outweigh the little door, and Tibet is more than ever in danger of being engulfed."[140]

Not only did population transfer and its consequences trouble Tibetans, but they also attracted the attention of the international community. In 1999, controversial World Bank-funding of a Chinese project involving the relocation of nearly 58,000 poor Chinese farmers onto the Tibetan plateau provoked global protest. The World Bank subsequently acknowledged it had rushed initial approval of the

project in violation of its own rules—neither it nor the Chinese government had conducted the requisite environmental and cultural impact assessments or explored less disruptive options.[141] China ultimately withdrew its request for the US$40 million loan before the Bank's Executive Directors could take their final vote. The decision meant that international funds were not available to the Chinese government to support the demographic restructuring of Tibetan areas.

Just as urban populations in Tibet experienced massive demographic change, rural livelihoods in Tibet were placed under enormous pressure by the implementation of the new development model. An estimated 2.25 million Tibetan herders live with their animals in the northern and eastern areas of the Tibetan plateau, and over centuries of practice had developed sophisticated livestock management techniques to address the challenges of their environment. The Chinese Communist take-over, and the resulting application of various 'scientific' socialist ideas about rangeland management, had proven profoundly disruptive for Tibet's nomads. Buffeted by policies that swung wildly from collectivization to nominally free-market commoditization (in which the state nonetheless intervened to preserve its own interests), Tibetan herders would rebuild their herds only to have some policy change knock them back into poverty. For Tibetan herders, "the changeability of state policy [was] as much a hazard as blizzards."[142]

After a series of environment-related natural disasters in China—including massive flooding of the *Drichu* or Yangtze River, the *Machu* or Yellow River running dry, and dust and sand storms that hit cities in China's east—Chinese scientists and policymakers determined that grassland degradation in the west was a critical issue. While Tibetans saw the degradation of their rangelands over the past 50 years as a direct result of Chinese policies, Chinese scientists identified over-grazing of livestock and 'unscientific' Tibetan livestock management practices as key causes of degradation.[143] Chinese authorities launched a massive program to move Tibetans out of pastoralism altogether. This program entailed fencing off pastureland, settling nomads into permanent housing, and limiting herd sizes. While these policies were intended to reverse the degradation in pastoral regions, the fencing and settlement policies instead appeared to exacerbate certain aspects of rangeland degradation[144] and led foreign rangeland experts to question whether sedentarization was ecologically sustainable on the Tibetan plateau.[145]

These policies also created a number of problems within nomadic Tibetan communities. In 1999, a Tibetan in Ngaba reported on the negative impact of the new fencing policies:

> *By destroying the basis for sustaining a nomadic style of life, future generations will have no chance to be either farmers or nomads, so the parents are forced to limit the number of children they have and control the growth of our population…the qualitative difference with regard to grazing pastures, drinking water, and animals leads to never-ending disputes and conflicts between neighbors and relatives. All the best pasture lands are appropriated by the Chinese government who, in turn, allocates them to top government offices and units.*[146]

Other nomads reported that pasturelands were distributed according to one's connections with officials or ability to bribe them, and complained of the tax burdens that were assessed on the basis of the land allocation's size rather than its productive value. In some cases, perceptions of inequitable allocation of plots led to violent conflict. Between 1997 and 1999, armed clashes among different tribes of herders in eastern Tibet led to shoot-outs and the deaths of nearly a dozen herdsmen.[147] Whereas local monks attempted to intervene to stop the violence, local authorities did nothing to stop the conflict, and were even accused of fostering it by permitting the disputants to become heavily armed.

Such conflicts were exacerbated by policies launched in 1999 to "convert farmland to forest" and "revert pasture to grassland" or *tuimu huancao*. The policy was connected to the 'household responsibility program' that divided up grazing lands and gave Tibetans certain rights, but not title, to specific plots of land. The main features of the tuimu huancao program were the fencing of grasslands, restric-

tions on grazing, and efforts to resettle nomadic populations.[148] While these policies were ostensibly launched for environmental conservation purposes, their execution in Tibetan areas led to arbitrary land confiscation and loss of economic livelihoods. In some areas, bans on grazing led to compulsory settlement and slaughter of herds.

Throughout this period, Chinese policy in Tibet underwent superficial evolutions that ultimately carried forward the same spirit as the Cultural Revolution as defined by the assimilation of Tibetans through management of all forms of cultural expression and rapid economic growth whose primary beneficiaries were Chinese. The tools used to accomplish these goals—suppression of monasteries, harsh political campaigns directed at the Dalai Lama and other aspects of Tibetan cultural distinction, ideological education that was ill-suited to Tibetan needs, state-led investment in infrastructure and industry, massive population influx, and forced settlement of nomads—were little changed from the 1960s except in their scale, deployment of modern technology and slightly less obvious ideological overtone. But only slightly, as the same labeling of Tibetan practices and beliefs as 'backward' and 'unscientific' that featured so heavily in the early discourse of the Chinese invasion in 1949 was used to attack religion and force herders to settle in unsustainable villages in the 1990s. As in the past, Tibetans continued to resist the imposition of Chinese social, cultural and economic values, and paid a heavy price for doing so.

## TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY TIBET: COERCION, CRACKDOWN AND CONTROL

> *Modern Chinese history can be characterized as a 'Tale of Three Fish.' Taiwan is still swimming in the ocean. No one has caught that fish—at least not yet. Hong Kong is alive but on display in a Chinese aquarium. Tibet, the third fish, is broiled and on the table, already half devoured: its language, its religion, its culture and its native people are disappearing faster than its glacial ice.*
>
> —*Arjia Rinpoche, Surviving the Dragon: A Tibetan Lama's Account of 40 Years under Chinese Rule (2010)*

In the 21st century, China's approach to cultural control in Tibet—periodic loosening followed by renewed tightening—continues in a context where the Chinese party-state is becoming vastly more wealthy, powerful and conscious of its growing stature in the world. Despite a lack of meaningful political reform after the 1989 Tiananmen massacre, the Chinese Communist Party has been able to maintain political power in China through the delivery of economic goods to a majority of the Chinese population, adoption of the rhetoric and some institutions of the rule of law, and encouraging a Chinese nationalism that conflates Party and state interests. This kind of nationalism was most thoroughly on display as Beijing hosted the 2008 Summer Olympics in a spectacular fashion clearly designed to establish China's place in the global firmament. After two decades of annual double-digit GDP growth, China surpassed Japan as the world's second largest economy in 2010. While hundreds of millions of Chinese people have benefitted from China's economic global integration and growth, the biggest beneficiaries by far have been the CCP and those close to it.

Even as Chinese authorities achieve unprecedented levels of domestic success and international prestige, they struggle to establish stability in Tibet and secure the loyalty of the Tibetan people. The general development-led policy approach to Tibet remains in place, augmented by a con-

centrated effort to shape Tibetan culture into a manageable form that will satisfy most Tibetans and deflect foreign criticisms. After the disastrous results of the conflict over the Panchen Lama's successor in the mid-1990s, Beijing appears to have settled on a policy of waiting out the Dalai Lama and establishing the means for controlling his successor, while simultaneously trying to limit his influence in Tibet and internationally. The party-state continues to develop its use of regulation, incentives and coercion to manage religious institutions. When Chinese policies have provided space for Tibetan cultural resurgence, Tibetans have taken full advantage and pushed the boundaries. However, Chinese authorities have continued their efforts to break down loyalty to the Dalai Lama and assert direct control over key pillars of Tibetan Buddhism such as the monastic curriculum and the process of reincarnation.

Despite two decades of rapid investment-led growth in Tibet, regional socio-economic disparities have worsened, and Tibetans continue to fall further behind China's galloping coastal areas. Beijing has responded to these disparities with a grander and more intense version of state-led economic development under the rubric of the Western Development Plan (WDP). Launched in 2000, the WDP is focused heavily on extractive industries and continues the commoditization of the Tibetan economy, in addition to the continuation of massive infrastructure development that facilitates large-scale Chinese migration. The implementation of these centrally planned development strategies places Tibetan cultural cohesion and traditional livelihoods in further jeopardy, and it reinforces Tibetan anger at the Chinese state and those who move into Tibet in its wake. The vigor with which these policies are being pursued, however, and the manner in which they are explicitly tied to overcoming Tibetan culture suggests that Beijing has made a strategic decision that the resources it wants to extract from Tibet are too important to be held up by the needs and demands of the Tibetan people.

Nonetheless, Tibetan culture survives despite the Chinese state's unrelenting efforts to control, manipulate and dilute it. While efforts to assert control in Tibet have grown increasingly sophisticated, Tibetans have shown tremendous cultural resilience in resisting them. Tibetan demands for the return of the Dalai Lama and for control over their cultural destiny and economic livelihoods invariably provoke crackdowns and renewed Chinese attempts at asserting overall control. The 2008 protests that rapidly spread across Tibet prompted a severe response by the Chinese authorities—one that continues to reverberate in the present highly contentious environment. The current crisis over the continued self-immolations of monks, nuns and other Tibetans, and the violent state response to subsequent Tibetan protests, has heightened what was an already tense situation.

In their effort to secure 'stability' and modernity in Tibet on CCP terms and bind it closer to the Chinese state, the Chinese party-state has created turmoil throughout Tibet while inadvertently reinforcing a broad sense of Tibetan identity that is highly distinct from the Chinese one. Beyond the harsh security response to the protests, Chinese authorities have lately acknowledged for the first time the need to coordinate policy across the various administrative units that cover the Tibetan population—the TAR and neighboring Tibetan autonomous areas in Sichuan, Gansu, Yunnan, and Qinghai provinces. China's response to the widespread nature of the protests and the commonality of problems the party-state has experienced in the various Tibetan autonomous areas is a *de facto* admission of something the Party has long and vigorously denied: ethnographic Tibet is something more than a construct of exile Tibetans' imagination. Unfortunately for Tibetans, the outcome of this recognition so far, and likely for the foreseeable future, has been the more uniform application of harsh and repressive policies across the plateau. In particular, the hard-line approaches that have long characterized CCP policies in the TAR are increasingly the norm across Tibetan areas that were previously viewed as more 'open' to cultural expression. Indeed, some scholars have posited that it is precisely this migration of harsh policies from the TAR to other Tibetan areas that has precipitated the current crisis. This homogenization of bad policy has been most profoundly felt in three areas that directly relate to elements of cultural genocide: controls on religious belief and practice; economic development and population policies; and suppression of Tibetan intellectual life, including education, language, and non-religious literary cultural expression.

## 'Undermining the Unity of the Nationalities:' China's Response to the 2008 Protests in Tibet

> "*Occupation is explained at home… The primary audience for the ritualized displays of power, ceremony and state symbolism are mean[t] primarily to convince domestic constituencies of the legitimacy of their rule, rather than convincing the conquered people.*"
>
> *—Tibetan academic Tsering Shakya*

The Chinese party-state's response to the 2008 protests in Tibet—particularly their internal propaganda and other elements of managing the Chinese public's reaction to these events—has demonstrated a cultural and political antagonism towards Tibetans that at times veered into racism. At best, the Chinese government displayed a stunningly neo-colonial attitude toward Tibetans in the aftermath of the events of spring 2008. At worst, the party-state intentionally used highly inflammatory imagery and rhetoric to stir up Chinese nationalism and chauvinism as a means to preserve its authority at a time of internal challenge, and avoid answering difficult questions about the failures of its policies in Tibet. By using the resources of the state to drive ethnic animosity within China, the government has dangerously set the stage for further dehumanization of the Tibetan people by the Chinese majority—an extremely toxic dynamic.

China's propaganda line on the Lhasa demonstrations took two primary tacks: shifting the blame for Tibetans' anger onto the bogeymen of 'foreign intervention'—whether the Dalai Lama, the CIA or CNN; and suggesting an inherent Tibetan quality of violence and irrationality that drove the Tibetans to riot. These themes are mutually reinforcing, in that they rely on a belief that Tibetans' backwardness and lack of agency is a key reason the 'outside agitator' is able to turn the Tibetans against their beneficent Chinese 'liberators.'

The official portrayals of Tibetans as violent and menacing, and the converse imagery of Chinese as innocent victims and the restorers of order were powerful signals to the Chinese population. Chinese state media's coverage of the 2008 events in Lhasa exclusively and extensively portrayed graphic Tibetan violence against innocent Chinese victims, but included no context for the events, let alone coverage of the abuse or deaths of Tibetans. This narrow portrayal may have created a wave of popular support for the Chinese response, but it also undid decades of propaganda effort in China (and beyond) about the 'unity of nationalities,' the trope of Tibetans as welcoming the Chinese, the trope of the Chinese as 'liberating' Tibet, and the harmony of China's multi-ethnic society.

During the height of the protests in 2008, the government hastily launched a gory exhibition of historical Tibet in Beijing, and a Chinese visitor was quoted in *China Daily*, an official Party paper, as saying: "I feel in the exhibition the barbarism and darkness that permeated in old Tibet, and have a better understanding how the backward system of mixing politics and religion thwarted Tibet's development and progress."[149]

The Chinese authorities also launched a media offensive on the riot in Lhasa on March 14, using prominent national outlets such as CCTV, as well as *People's Daily*, *China Youth Daily*, *Southern Metropolis Daily*, the *Global Times* and the *International Herald Leader*, for extensive coverage on issues of media bias in the western press, framing a few examples of inaccurate coverage—such as mistakes in photo captions that attributed the actions of Nepalese police to Chinese—as intentional bias. These reports never mentioned the fact that all western media

had been barred from reporting inside Tibet since March 14, 2008, as well as the issues of the state media's own bias in coverage of Tibet such as the complete lack of information on Tibetan casualties or serious analysis of the causes of the violence.

The authorities' views in this regard were magnified by a segment of Chinese Internet users known as *fenqing* or 'angry youth'—a highly nationalistic cohort of young, mostly male, heavy Internet users. Some of these youth overlap with an important aspect of Beijing's sophisticated approach to managing the online environment: the so-called '50-cent party,' so-named because they are allegedly paid 50 cents for each of their posts, which defend or amplify the government's views on issues in both the domestic and international online space.[150] The fenqing set up an anti-CNN website in Chinese and English, and launched a so-called 'human flesh search engine' targeting foreign correspondents in China. The 'human flesh search engine' uses crowd sourcing to identify personal information, such as the home address, of targeted individuals. In one case, a Chinese student at Duke University, who appeared in the U.S. media attempting to mediate between Tibetan and Chinese protesters, was targeted by Chinese netizens as a traitor. Her family in China was forced to move from their home after their address was publicized, and they were subjected to vandalism and threats.[151] In order to help those interested in learning about China's version of events, the *People's Daily* established dedicated English and Chinese websites (the English one is titled 'Tell you a true Tibet' at *http://english.people.com.cn/90002/93607/index.html*) that featured all their stories on the protests, as well as various supplementary articles refuting the positions of foreign governments, the Dalai Lama and anyone else who criticized Chinese policies in Tibet.

Today Lhasa is secured through extensive armed patrols throughout the city at all hours and a comprehensive CCTV system that records every minute at virtually every public space in the city, presumably to allay the fears of the Chinese who live there. Its Tibetan inhabitants, however, live under occupation: their houses are searched, their phone lines and email monitored, their conversations examined for ideological content, their travel constrained, and their loyalty to the state questioned.

## Religion in Service of the Party: the Communist Party as Living Buddha

In 2000, the TAR authorities launched yet another in a long line of crackdowns on religious practices in Lhasa. Thangkas or religious paintings, pictures of the Dalai Lama and altars were banned in private homes; schoolchildren were forbidden to visit monasteries or wear Buddhist protection cords to school; and teachers were told to emphasize education on atheism.[152] These measures were being implemented at the same time the Chinese leadership was garnering generally positive international attention for its self-proclaimed progress in developing the 'rule of law,' including a 1999 amendment that incorporated adherence to the rule of law into the Chinese constitution for the first time. Unfortunately, the crackdown in Lhasa was not an unusual abrogation of Tibetans' freedom of religion but was instead representative of the Chinese government's long-running paranoia about the role of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibetan identity and the limits of Beijing's efforts toward the 'legal management' of Tibetan Buddhism.

While Beijing has remained hostile to religion in general, its attitude toward Tibetan Buddhism reflects a continued perception that Tibetans' religious beliefs and other distinctive features of Tibetan culture are bound tightly to their desire to be rid of Chinese rule. In order to manage this problem of culture and 'splittism,' the Chinese party-state has established a number of institutions, procedures and regulations intended to manage the practice of Tibetan

Buddhism and disaggregate it from Tibetan national identity. Among the most pernicious exercises of state authority under these regulations is the 2007 requirement that the atheist Chinese Communist government must approve the selection of any reincarnate lama in order for the lineage holder to be recognized as legitimate. This is an unprecedented usurpation of spiritual authority by the state. The November 2011 announcement that Communist Party cadres would be stationed in all Tibetan monasteries on a permanent basis is yet another escalation in the party-state's battle to control Tibetan Buddhism.[153]

Where a legalistic approach has been deemed insufficient, the Chinese authorities have fallen back on the ambiguous authority of the party-state to make it as difficult as possible for Tibetans to practice their faith and thrive in modern Chinese society. These social and political strictures on Tibetan Buddhism are often unwritten and function as the true limits on what the party-state allows Tibetans to believe. A central focus of both the legal and extra-legal management of Tibetan Buddhism has been on curtailing Tibetans' devotion to the Dalai Lama not only as a political figure but also (since 1994) as a religious figure. The tools used by the Party in this regard include: ongoing propaganda and re-education campaigns; financial and other inducements for those who cooperate with Party objectives; denunciation of the Dalai Lama and declaration of support for the Party as pre-conditions of enrollment in monasteries; encouragement of factional in-fighting among Tibetan Buddhists; and multi-layered security measures to contain and prevent dissent. When these methods do not yield their intended objective, the state has not hesitated to employ more kinetic tactics: expulsion from monasteries, arrest, torture, and imprisonment. As the 2008 Tibet-wide protests and the more recent self-immolation crisis have demonstrated, however, these legal and coercive methods have failed to root out Tibetans' faith in Buddhism, their devotion to the Dalai Lama, and their desire to be free of Chinese strictures on the expression of their beliefs.

Beijing considers the special relationship between the Dalai Lama and his people as the key expression of the Tibetan national identity and therefore the key threat to Chinese power and legitimacy in Tibet. The Communist Party has continued to heighten its attacks on the Dalai Lama in the hope of severing this special bond. It has done this by pursuing a line of attack that resonates well with Chinese Communist logic but has the exact opposite effect on most Tibetans. According to the Chinese view, the Dalai Lama has lost his legitimacy as a religious leader by virtue of his involvement in political advocacy on behalf of Tibet and Tibetans. Tibetans, however, consider his actions on their behalf to be a legitimate, if not an essential, component of his role as spiritual and national leader.

With the arrival of Zhang Qingli as the TAR Party Secretary in 2005, a period of relative calm in the rhetorical battle against the Dalai Lama abruptly came to an end. Zhang, who had sharpened his teeth under the infamous Party Secretary of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, Wang Lequan, was quick to engage in diatribes against the Dalai Lama that recalled the Cultural Revolution and days of Chen Kuiyuan. He referred to the Dalai Lama in deeply offensive terms such as "the biggest obstacle hindering Tibetan Buddhism from establishing a normal order" and "a wolf in monk's clothes, a devil with a human face," and referred to the Party's conflict with him as a "life and death struggle."[154]

Another key figure during this period was Zhou Yongkang, who served as the Sichuan Party Secretary (1999–2002) and then was appointed as the Minister of Public Security and a member of the Central Tibet Work Coordination Working Group (2002–2007). His tenure in these positions placed him at the decision-making center of repression and set the Party on an unmistakably confrontational path with Tibetan culture in Kham. He once remarked that Tibetans were "wasting" their money by giving donations to monasteries, and complained of the heavy burden that teaching Tibetan language placed on the government.[155] He also presided over the destruction of Larung Gar and the prosecution of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche (see Text Box on next page)—soon after which Zhou was promoted to Minister of Public Security. His subsequent elevation to the Politburo's Standing Committee and CCP Central Committee Secretary of Political and Legislative Affairs, through which he has oversight of the security services and the judiciary, has ensured that he continues to play a role in the implementation of a hard-line security policy in Tibetan areas. He is believed to be a member of the 'small group' of top leaders who set Tibet policy.

## Denouncing the Dalai Lama

In the fall of 2004, the Lhasa municipal authorities formally re-launched and set about institutionalizing 'patriotic education' in area monasteries and nunneries.[156] Subsequently, patriotic education—including the pernicious practice of requiring monks and nuns to denounce the Dalai Lama—was intensely carried out in the TAR and Tibetan areas of Sichuan province. Since the 2008 protests, the pursuit of denunciation has intensified across Tibet. It is not only a feature of patriotic education, but has become a requirement for admission into a monastery or nunnery. Today in some areas of Tibet, monks and nuns seeking residence in a monastic institution are made to recite the following anti-Dalai Lama slogans while being videotaped: "I oppose the Dalai clique; I will not keep the Dalai's photo in my house; my thinking will not be influenced by the Dalai clique; I love the Communist Party; I will follow the Party no matter what."[157] Practitioners who refuse are denied entry to or expelled from their monastery, lose their rights as religious practitioners and, in some cases, have been imprisoned and physically abused.

This requirement to denounce the Dalai Lama is devastating to Tibetans who hold him as the emanation of *Chenrezig* or *Avalokiteshvara*, the bodhisattva of compassion and protector deity of Tibet. One of the most fundamental vows that all Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns take is a pledge of spiritual loyalty to their teachers, and the Dalai Lama is the 'root' guru or principle teacher for all Tibetan Buddhists. Denouncing him is anathema to Tibetans and creates extreme negativity as a violation of the most sacred monastic vow. Nonetheless, the Dalai Lama has given broad dispensation to anyone who would be forced under duress to denounce him, instructing him or her to "do that without any hesitation…"[158]

For senior religious leaders who fail to operate within the party-state's parameters, or who become so popular they are perceived to constitute a threat to Chinese authority in Tibet, the consequences can be especially severe. Traditionally, lamas, monastery abbots and tulkus are imbued with moral authority and play an important role as community leaders. Tibetans turn to them for guidance and advice on both religious and secular matters. Because the Party attempts to assert itself as the sole religious and cultural arbiter in Tibetan areas, it has sought to undermine this traditional role of local religious leaders. As the Chinese author Wang Lixiong writes, "Local political power has become the only controlling force, one that obviously demands the surrender of monks and nuns to its authority. It has nothing to do with respecting the Dharma or observing monastic vows."[159]

On April 18, 2001, the Larung Gar Buddhist Institute near the small town of Serthar (Chinese: Seda) in Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture received an order to cap the number of its resident monks at 1,000. The order came shortly after a 'work team' visited Larung Gar to conduct patriotic re-education campaigns and found more than 7,000 monks and nuns living and studying at the sprawling spiritual encampment—including a substantial number of Chinese.

The respected teacher Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok founded the Larung Gar monastic encampment as an informal meditation retreat in 1980. In 1987, the 10th Panchen Lama recognized Larung Gar as an official Buddhist institute but it had no formal admissions procedures—monks and nuns were free to come and go, building their own residences as they did. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok was a learned and highly revered teacher whose extensive teachings and empowerments would sometimes last for more than a month. At its height, Larung Gar had more than 10,000 students.

Larung Gar's spontaneous and dramatic growth—particularly the large number of Chinese practitioners who sought out the Khenpo's teachings—was a source of official

concern, especially as control over religion intensified following the Third Work Forum in 1994. During a visit of Chinese officials to Serthar early in 2001, the Khenpo reportedly said that because he had not invited monks or nuns to come to Larung Gar, it would be inappropriate for him to ask them to leave.[160] In June of that year, several thousand students were evicted and security officials brought in work crews to destroy thousands of monastic residences. The Chinese students were first targeted for expulsion, followed by the large community of Tibetan nuns who were drawn to Larung Gar by not only the Khenpo but his niece, a nun and learned scholar in her own right. Approximately 3,000 nuns were expelled, their residences razed, and personal scriptures and devotional statues destroyed. There were reports that some nuns committed suicide.[161] Following the demolitions, the authorities set up a permanent security barrier around the encampment and established a police presence within the heart of Larung Gar to monitor its population. When Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok died on January 7, 2004, and despite official efforts to keep mourners away, more than 50,000 were reportedly at Larung Gar at the time of his cremation.[162] Today, Larung Gar is a shadow of its former self and remains under strict supervision by the local authorities, but still serves as an important center of Buddhist scholarship.

In December 2002, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, the popular and respected founder of Kham Nalanda Monastery in Kardze, was sentenced to death with a two-year suspension on charges of 'causing explosions [and] inciting the separation of the state.'[163] The Dalai Lama recognized Tenzin Delek as a reincarnate lama while he was studying in India in the 1980s. Upon his return to Tibet, his work to protect the local environment, and his establishment of Tibetan social and cultural institutions, including schools for nomadic children and homes for the elderly, increased his esteem among local Tibetans. In the course of his work, Tenzin Delek frequently came into conflict with Chinese authorities who were threatened by his influence in the mode of traditional lamas and, as in the case of Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, who were operating under the strictures of the Third Work Forum on Tibet.

Tenzin Delek's conviction was the culmination of more than a decade of effort by Chinese authorities in Sichuan to curb his influence in the Lithang area—long a hotbed of Tibetan nationalist sentiment. According to experts in Chinese law, the trial of Tenzin Delek and that of his co-defendant in the explosion/separatism case, Lobsang Dhondrup, who was summarily executed in January 2003, fell far short of international standards of due process and the requirements of Chinese law.[164] Tenzin Delek's death sentence was subsequently commuted to life in prison. In December 2009, Tenzin Delek's relatives attempted and failed to deliver to the Chinese government a petition signed by 40,000 Tibetans asking that his case be reopened and he be given a new trial.[165] At the same time, Tibetans in Nyagchukha town in Kardze staged a hunger strike in support of Tenzin Delek, and there were reports that as many as 90 of them were arrested.[166]

Kardze was also the scene of as many as 50 long-life ceremonies for the Dalai Lama in February 2002, following reports that the Tibetan leader was ill. At least 20 persons were detained in connection with the ceremonies, and local Tibetans reported that hundreds of PLA troops flooded into the area and established a security perimeter around Kardze town.[167] This security crackdown represented an intensification of already stringent policies that had been put in place following the detention of Geshe Sonam Phuntsok, another respected local lama, who was arrested and tortured in October 1999 for organizing a long-life ceremony for the Dalai Lama. Following Sonam's arrest, Tibetans in Kardze launched significant protests that resulted in a virtual lockdown of Kardze. Geshe Sonam was released in October 2004, and was in extremely poor health due to the maltreatment he suffered during his interrogation and incarceration.[168] He died on April 5, 2008, as Tibet—including many areas of Kardze—was being engulfed by the largest and most widespread protests since the 1959 uprising.

Given the influence that senior lamas, especially the reincarnates or tulkus, are capable of wielding in Tibetan society, as well as the links these figures can develop beyond their immediate geographic area through contact with their sectarian hierarchy and foreign followers of their lineage, it is understandable that the Chinese party-state has sought to control them. Having learned important lessons from the Panchen Lama's reincarnation, the party-state sought to

regularize its control over the process of selection, recognition and installation of all reincarnate lamas. In July 2007, the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) issued extraordinary new regulations requiring that the Chinese government must approve the recognition of all reincarnate lamas. The new "Management Measures for the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism," also known as Order No. 5, require that recognition of all reincarnate lamas be authorized by Chinese authorities, with the level of authority required for approval corresponding to vague notions of the reincarnate's 'impact.' Reincarnates are also charged to "respect and protect the principles of the unification of the state, protecting the unity of the minorities, protecting religious concord and social harmony, and protecting the normal order of Tibetan Buddhism."[169]

While ostensibly promulgated to guarantee freedom of religious belief, the actual result of this regulation is the opposite: a clear and inappropriate interference in the spiritual domain of Tibetan Buddhists. The authorities have used their assertion of control over the recognition of reincarnate lamas to keep monasteries and their leaders in line. The events at Rongpo Chojey Monastery are one example. On July 23, 2010, Voice of Tibet radio reported that Lama Dawa Khyenrab Wangchug, a reincarnate Tibetan Buddhist teacher at Rongpo Chojey Monastery in Nakchu, TAR, had been arrested in April and accused of having links with the Dalai Lama.[170] The Chinese authorities stripped Lama Dawa of his right to hold the incarnation lineage. The monastery was subjected to an intense patriotic education campaign, under which its monks were ordered to oppose the Dalai Lama and sever ties with Lama Dawa. Under pressure from the intense patriotic education campaign, a 70-year-old monk named Ngawang Gyatso reportedly committed suicide on May 20, 2010, and 17 monks were ejected from the monastery when they refused to denounce their teachers. The authorities labeled the monastery a 'criminal monastery' that must be watched constantly, and Lama Dawa is believed to still be under some form of 'soft' detention (i.e. house arrest).[171] In seeking to control reincarnation, the party-state hopes to recast religion as a tool to transform Tibetan religious identity (which assumes loyalty to the Dalai Lama) into identification with party-state loyalties. It will do this by placing persons presumed to be loyal to the party-state in positions that control and supervise the activities of Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetologist Gray Tuttle notes that regulations such as Order No. 5 emerge from a sense among Chinese authorities of the "desperate importance" of transferring to the Party the religious and secular authority that these lamas have in Tibetan communities.[172]

Since the protests of 2008, the party-state's perceived need to manage Tibetan Buddhism has become more urgent. Because many of the protests were led by monks and nuns or started at monasteries, the authorities launched renewed patriotic education campaigns, detained and expelled large numbers of monastics and, at times, have used deadly force to put down protests by monks and nuns. There were more than 200 protests across the Tibetan plateau in the year following the March 10, 2008, protests in Lhasa and beyond. These protests were overwhelmingly peaceful, and virtually all of them started out that way, yet the Chinese media refers to the events of 2008 only in the context of the 'violent riots' that occurred in Lhasa. According to official Chinese statistics, more than 1,200 Tibetans were detained as a result of the protests. Many were subjected to brutality in custody, and many remain unaccounted for to this day. Dozens of unarmed protestors were shot dead, and others have died in prison due to torture, or have committed suicide as a result of the trauma of the post-protest crackdown.

In the wake of the protests, the Chinese government deployed tens of thousands of security personnel across Tibet. Monasteries were surrounded by troops, and towns were under virtual martial law. Nearly the entire Tibetan plateau was sealed off, with the exception of official attempts to carry out controlled foreign media and diplomatic tours. The authorities imposed sweeping new measures to purge monasteries of 'troublemakers' and launched a systematic new attack on Tibetan Buddhism "reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution"[173] sanctioned at the highest levels of Chinese leadership. In his book *The Division of Heaven and Earth*, the Tibetan writer Shogdung accused Chinese authorities of "hunting [Tibetans] down like innocent wild animals, like pigs, yaks and sheep killed in slaughter-house and scattered them like a heap of peas" and of turning Tibet into "a 21st century place of terror."[174]

## The Sangha and the 2008 Lhasa Protests

The present security crackdown, which continues to provoke tension and protest in Tibet, was initially a reaction to events in Lhasa and beyond beginning on March 10, 2008. On that morning, the 49th anniversary of the 1959 Tibetan uprising, some 300 monks from Drepung Monastery staged a protest march to Lhasa city center. They were blocked at the main road by security forces, where many of them staged a sit-in protest, reciting prayers for the long life of the Dalai Lama. After a standoff, dozens were arrested and the rest obliged to return to the monastery.

That same day, a small group of monks from Sera Monastery along with lay-people staged a demonstration calling for Tibet's independence outside Lhasa's Jokhang Temple. According to an eyewitness who reported the incident on a blog,[175] after several Sera monks shouted slogans outside the temple, Tibetans "formed a strong, silent, peaceful circle around the police." Soon the police called for backup. "Undercover agents, not so difficult to recognize, film the whole happening. Especially the faces. This is one method to create fear. Suddenly there is panic. Six or seven monks are arrested and driven away… In the meanwhile big numbers of policemen arrive. They drive everybody apart."[176]

Protestors were beaten and arrested, charged and imprisoned. The following day, hundreds of Sera monks attempted to march into the city demanding their release. They were blocked by security forces (2,000 riot police according to various reports) and confined to Sera Monastery, which like Drepung was also sealed off. On March 12, monks from Ganden Monastery, the third great monastery in the Lhasa environs, staged a protest, resulting in a confrontation with security forces and the blockading of that monastery.

Meanwhile, local officials and police began house-to-house searches in the Tibetan quarter of Lhasa, looking for unregistered monks and nuns, and checking on residents with previous political records, as well as searching for images of the Dalai Lama. Movements of Tibet University students were restricted, and warning the small number of people who worked for foreign NGOs in Lhasa against passing information on the situation to the outside world. Foreign and Tibetan witnesses reported seeing a large influx of military vehicles in the western part of the city at this time.

At midday on March 14, a confrontation between monks, local people and security forces erupted at the Ramoche Temple, which faces onto a busy market street in the heart of Lhasa. The circumstances of the beginning of the riot are unclear; one report indicates that a security officer provoked a Tibetan who was already angry about the intimidation of monks, which then escalated into a physical scuffle. Nearby police vehicles were set on fire, and hundreds of local Tibetans confronted the police, who were outnumbered and soon withdrew. Eyewitnesses recalled seeing police being pelted with stones.

The riot spread to the area around the Jokhang Temple, and across the Tibetan quarter. One group of protestors attempted to march from the temple square towards the TAR government compound, but was turned back by armed security forces. Another group attacked shops and property in the area around the Woba-ling mosque, where there were also confrontations with the security forces. Protestors shouted slogans calling for Tibet's independence and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet.

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The security forces largely withdrew and did not emerge again on the streets to tackle the rioters for several hours, according to numerous eyewitness reports. Professor Robert Barnett of Columbia University wrote:

> *No reinforcements were sent into the area for some three hours, though they were waiting on the outskirts. It was the traditional Party method for handling serious unrest, waiting for orders as to whether to shoot or not. This vacuum allowed what were now rioters to turn from attacking police to the next available symbol of Chinese governance, the Chinese migrant population, whose rapid increase in Tibetan towns, in many of which they appear to now be a majority, has increasingly fuelled until now silent resentment among the indigenous population.*[177]

By most accounts, it was not until early evening that security forces closed in on the Tibetan quarter with tanks and armored personnel carriers (these vehicles, with caterpillar tracks, are often described as tanks by witnesses), shooting at and arresting those demonstrators who had not already fled. According to Tibetan witness accounts, security forces (whether military or police) fired on unarmed demonstrators, killing dozens, especially in the western areas of Lhasa. By the following morning, order had been restored to the city center. Military convoys patrolled the city, and soldiers and police guarded every intersection. Foreign tourists and many Chinese residents were moved out of the Tibetan quarter, while Tibetan residents were confined to their homes or places of temporary shelter. By the evening of March 15 at the latest, security personnel (including the military) began house-to-house searches, making arrests of those suspected of involvement in the protests, including anyone without valid residence papers or with a previous record of dissent. Even by later official admission, many Tibetans who had not participated in the protests were arrested at that time.

Tibetan witness accounts report an extreme level of arbitrary brutality in the conduct of searches and arrests, including deliberate attempts to cripple detainees, break limbs and cause internal injuries. The main detention facilities in Lhasa were filled to capacity and extra detentions centers were improvised in Toelung Dechen County in Lhasa Municipality, and in a warehouse near the new railway station. There were numerous credible reports of appalling conditions, including overcrowding, no provision of water or food, denial of medical treatment to the wounded, and torture during interrogation. These accounts also claim that Lhasa hospitals refused to treat the wounded, and that security forces took possession of all corpses of those killed, by force if necessary, in order to destroy evidence of the manner of death. In one reliable account, a Tibetan spoke of witnessing bodies piled together in the back of an army truck on the road leaving Lhasa.

As in the past, in 2008 Kham and Amdo quickly became the focal point for Tibetan protests and violent reprisals by the authorities. Khampa Tibetans in Kardze and the neighboring area of Ngaba in Amdo have played a key role in every Tibetan resistance movement since the 1949 Chinese Communist invasion. In recent decades, their frustration with the shrill campaigns against the Dalai Lama, economic policies that led to the loss of land and livelihoods, and an invasion of Chinese prospectors who engaged in largely unregulated extraction of minerals had pushed these communities to the breaking point. In January 2008, months before the first protests occurred, the *Ganzi Daily* reported that for 'historical reasons,' the work of "maintaining public order and safeguarding stability" in the area was "very arduous."[178] Kardze also had the dubious distinction of having more known political detainees (55) since 1987 than any

other Tibetan county outside the TAR, and a public security budget that was dramatically higher than that of every other county in Sichuan, except the neighboring Tibetan county of Ngaba (which it narrowly edged out in 2008).[179] A strident new political education campaign had been underway in Kardze since spring of 2007, producing high levels of resentment and frustration throughout the lay and monastic communities.

On March 18, 2008, a small protest in Kardze town rapidly grew in size and was confronted by security forces who broke up the demonstration, killing four protesters in the process, and arresting at least 15 others.[180] After the demonstration was put down, additional security forces arrived and the area was placed under martial law. Undeterred, protests continued in monasteries and towns across Kham for weeks, a number of which ended with the death of protesters.[181]

On June 28, 2008, Li Changping, Governor and Deputy Party Secretary of the Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, issued "Measures for dealing strictly with rebellious monasteries and individual monks and nuns: Order from the People's Government of Ganzi TAP, No. 2." This new set of regulations on the management of monastic institutions in Kardze instructed that monks and nuns:

> *Who do not agree to be registered and photographed, who leave the monastery premises as they please and refuse to correct themselves despite repeated re-education, will be completely expelled from the monastery, will have their rights as religious practitioners annulled, will be sent back to their native places, and their residential cells will be demolished…any tulku, khenpo and geshe who does not abide by the order will not be allowed to participate in religious activities.*[182]

Order No. 2 goes on to state that monks and nuns "who show stubborn attitude will be counseled, strictly given warning, stripped of their rights as religious practitioners and expelled from their monasteries, and held in custody doing re-education," and that tulkus "will be stripped of their right to hold the incarnation lineage."[183]

Another center of protest in Sichuan was Kirti Monastery in Ngaba county. Ngaba Kirti Monastery is one of the largest and most important in Tibet, and in 2008 with several affiliated branch monasteries in the region—all of which are under the patronage of the Kirti Rinpoche, who lives in exile in India. Because of the high degree of contact between Kirti Monastery in Tibet and its sister institution in exile, ICT was able to develop a relatively complete timeline of events in that area (see ICT's Tibet at a Turning Point for a more comprehensive discussion). Based on reports from Kirti and other locations in and around Ngaba, there were a number of protests involving both monks and local laypeople. At Kirti itself, a protest on March 16 featuring thousands of monks and townspeople was met by a large contingent of security personnel. The security forces fired shots into the unarmed crowds, killing and wounding an unknown number of demonstrators. Others died in detention or shortly after release as a result of torture, and at least one monk from nearby Gomang Monastery committed suicide after being beaten by security forces. Kirti Monastery was subjected to a military blockade, and security forces issued a 'shoot on sight' order for suspected demonstrators.[184]

On May 12, 2008, following a devastating earthquake in Sichuan province that killed tens of thousands of people, the Kirti monks sent an open letter to the authorities asking for permission to conduct religious rites for the dead and suffering victims of the earthquake. The letter contained the following message to the Chinese people:

> *Since March 10, in all places covering the three main regions of Tibet, Tibetans protested against the Chinese authorities. The Chinese Communist Party sent in personnel in an organized fashion and marked every Tibetan, especially monks, as criminals. Bloody killings and beatings that were completely inhuman took place—too much for our hearts to hear about and too much for our eyes to witness. Innocent Tibetans were labeled as criminals in the minds of the Chinese, with whom we have shared thousands of years of history as neighbors. But because of these negative views, Tibetans, especially monks, are treated more like enemies by ordinary Chinese people.*

> *But from our side, we are making it clear that we are not protesting against ordinary Chinese people but against the policies of the Chinese government towards Tibet.*[185]

There is no evidence of a Chinese government response.

In Gansu province, Labrang Monastery was the center of the Tibetan protests. Like Kirti, Labrang is a significant monastery in Tibet and has a history of symbolic Tibetan nationalist protests over the years. Labrang monks led the first protests in Sangchu (Chinese: Xiahe) on the evening of March 14, 2008, the same day protests in Lhasa descended into chaos. That night, security forces raided Labrang Monastery, smashing altars, burning photos of the Dalai Lama and threatening monks. Over the following days there were multiple protests in the area, including one on March 18 in the town of Bora, where local herders were captured on video replacing the Chinese flag at the primary school with the Tibetan national flag.[186]

On April 10, the Chinese government inexplicably brought a group of foreign journalists to Labrang as part of a tightly controlled official visit. Fifteen monks interrupted the journalists' tour of the monastery to stage a demonstration appealing for human rights, Tibetan freedom, an end to Chinese repression, and the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. According to Labrang Jigme, who was the head of the Labrang DMC: "Monks who spoke to some reporters were beaten with batons and had their legs broken; on some, they used electric batons on their heads and in their mouths—the electric baton affected their brains and some have become disabled...driven to a type of insanity."[187] Two monks from this group of protestors have since died; one following torture in custody and the second after becoming ill while in hiding from police.[188]

Labrang Jigme was himself abducted by security forces and subjected to psychological torture during six months in detention. In a remarkable videotaped testimony available on YouTube, Jigme alleges he was handcuffed, shackled and tied to a chair with a black cloth covering his face. He goes on to relate his treatment to the broader Chinese policy and attitude toward Tibetans:

> *A young soldier pointed an automatic rifle at me and said in Chinese, 'This is made to kill you, Ahlos (derogatory term used for Tibetans by some Chinese). You make one move, and I will definitely shoot and kill you with this gun. I will throw your corpse in the trash and nobody will ever know.'*
>
> *This is the case of a powerful nationality harassing and oppressing a small nationality, a big nation making weapons to kill a small nationality; if they are doing such things at the lower levels, it goes without saying that they are doing worse things to us at higher levels. The way they oppress and murder Tibetans, and can utter such words while aiming guns [at us], stunned me. By telling us that Tibetans could be killed and our dead bodies dumped in the trash and that nobody would know - we are not even treated like dogs and pigs. If other people's dogs and pigs are killed, there will be somebody to claim them. Then why won't Tibetans be claimed after death? We are ordered not to claim our fellow Tibetans' bodies even after death. At that time, I realized that there is no racial equality.*[189]

(The video can be viewed at: *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ac-V82xAaUg*.)[190]

At the time of writing, Labrang Jigme was again in detention.[191]

## i. Tibetan Self-immolations and Other Protests

Tapey, a Tibetan monk at Kirti Monastery, was the first in Tibet to protest by self-immolation when he set himself ablaze on February 27, 2009. He survived but his current whereabouts and wellbeing are unknown. As of April 2, 2012, when this report went to print, 33 Tibetans in Tibet had protested in this way, and 24 of them are known to have died. Initially, self-immolation protests were only undertaken by members of Tibet's monastic community, more recently however, Tibetan lay people, including a mother of four, have set fire to themselves in protest against China's policies in Tibet. These individuals have challenged

the Chinese authorities in the strongest possible way, expressing a profound rejection of the current state of affairs in Tibet.

Those who have chosen to self-immolate would have been aware of the Buddhist perspective on self-sacrifice for the benefit of others. These acts would not have been undertaken without careful consideration of the spiritual ramifications and the distinction between self-sacrifice and suicide, given that Buddhist precepts discourage suicide as profoundly harmful to the future lives of an individual.

The conditions Tibetans face under the rigid controls of the Chinese government amount are the reason behind the Tibetan self-immolations and amount to "some kind of cultural genocide," according to the Dalai Lama who made this comment days after Palden Choetso, a 35-year old Tibetan nun self-immolated, and after the Chinese government blamed "outside forces" for causing the Tibetan self-immolations. "Including many Chinese from mainland China who visit Tibet, they all have the impression things are terrible… Some kind of cultural genocide is taking place. That's why, you see, these sorts of sad incidents happen, due to the desperateness of the situation," the Dalai Lama said at a news conference in Tokyo.[192]

From his adopted monastery in exile in India, the 17th Karmapa also issued a statement about the self-immolations in Tibet:

> *These desperate acts, carried out by people with pure motivation, are a cry against the injustice and repression under which they live… Each report of self-immolation from Tibet has filled my heart with pain. Most of those who have died have been very young. They had a long future ahead of them, an opportunity to contribute in ways that they have now foregone. In Buddhist teaching life is precious. To achieve anything worthwhile we need to preserve our lives. We Tibetans are few in number, so every Tibetan life is of value to the cause of Tibet. Although the situation is difficult, we need to live long and stay strong without losing sight of our long-term goals.*[193]

Following the March 16, 2011, self-immolation of Kirti monk Phuntsog, Kirti Monastery was placed under lock-down, with monks subjected to a stringent patriotic education campaign and the constant presence of hundreds of armed security personnel. Some 300 monks were taken away from the monastery in large trucks to unknown locations for the purpose of "legal education," and the police reportedly beat to death two elderly Tibetans who were participating in a vigil at the gates of the monastery in an attempt to protect the monks during the security raid. The Chinese authorities implemented a terror campaign at Kirti Monastery whereby monks under political suspicion were dragged from their cells in the middle of the night, set on by dogs, and returned later, exhausted by torture; others were expelled or imprisoned. Ironically, the Chinese authorities themselves have characterized the self-immolations as acts of "terrorism in disguise."

Dramatic video footage of the security crackdown in Ngaba was released on April 19, 2011, a month after it was taken, which refutes the Chinese government's assertion that the situation was "normal" and "harmonious."[194] Photos believed to have been taken in July 2011 in the Ngaba area further confirmed that the situation was tantamount to martial law, and that the authorities were using Cultural Revolution-era tactics of public shaming and parading of monks and laypersons with signboards about their 'crimes' to intimidate the public.[195]

There have been a number of detentions, arrests and sentences handed down in Ngaba during the ongoing crackdown that has followed the self-immolations. The Barkham (Chinese: Ma'erkang) County People's Court in Ngaba sentenced Kirti monks Losang Tenzin, age 22, to 13 years imprisonment, and another Losang Tenzin, known as Nak Ten, to ten years in prison on August 30, 2011. On August 29, the same court sentenced Phuntog's uncle, 46-year old Kirti monk Losang Tsondru (named in the Chinese state media as Drongdru), to 11 years imprisonment. The Chinese state media reported the three sentences, stating that the two monks sentenced on August 30: "plotted, instigated and assisted in the self-immolation of fellow monk Rigzin Phuntsog (Phuntsog is erroneously referred to by the Chinese media as "Rigzin Phuntsog"), causing his death…

Drongdru was given the sentence because he hid the injured monk and prevented emergency treatment, causing delayed treatment and the subsequent death for his disciple and nephew, according to the verdict." [196]

On or around May 2, 2011, the Ngaba County People's Court sentenced 31-year old Kirti monk Losang Dargye of Me'uruma township in Ngaba to three years in prison. He is believed to have been among a group of Drepung monks who had protested in Lhasa on March 10, 2008, and was detained for some months before being allowed to return to Ngaba. Police and soldiers detained him on April 11, 2011, from his quarters in the monastery. Kirti monk and monastery storekeeper, Konchok Tsultrim, age 33, from the rural area of Tawa Gongma was arrested after March 16, 2011. The Ngaba county People's Court sentenced him in early May 2011 to three years in prison.

A U.S. State Department spokesperson said at a daily press briefing on April 14, 2011: "We have seen that Chinese security forces have cordoned off the Kirti Monastery in Sichuan province. They've also imposed onerous restrictions on the monks and the general public. And we believe these are inconsistent with internationally recognized principles of religious freedom and human rights. We continue to monitor the situation closely and are obviously concerned by it." On June 8, 2011, the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances called on the Chinese authorities "to disclose the fate and whereabouts of all those who have been subject to enforced disappearances in China, including a group of Tibetan monks whose fate or whereabouts still remain unknown."

Those committing self-immolations do so in the context of a shared history over the past half century of dispossession and loss, and a systematic assault against the religious practices and beliefs that are at the core of Tibetan identity. The last words of nun Palden Choetso—who walked out of her nunnery on November 3, 2011, doused herself in kerosene, and set fire to herself—included prayers for the long life of the Dalai Lama. Calls for the Dalai Lama's long life and return to Tibet have been a consistently expressed by Tibetans who have self-immolated since Tapey in February 2009. In the first footage to emerge of a self-immolation, Kirti monk Lobsang Kunchok is seen lying on the ground surrounded by armed troops in riot gear. The chilling scream of a woman, calling the name of the Dalai Lama over and over again, can be heard in the background.[197] Tibetans' sense of separation from their spiritual leader has never been so acute.

The self-immolations are a tragic indictment of China's misrule in Tibet. Just as the Chinese authorities responded to the overwhelmingly peaceful protests that swept across the Tibetan plateau in 2008 by strengthening the very measures that had led to the unrest in the first place, so their responses to the self-immolations risk the further loss of life and radicalization among Tibetans. A Tibetan from Ngaba recently wrote that the self-immolations are occurring:

> *…because many people cannot see how to go on living… The 'Patriotic Education' campaign and violent intimidation being touted as the solution to this issue are just a return to the old patterns of confrontation and will lead only to the creation of new confrontations. To have to relinquish our ethnic-national identity and culture is to relinquish the point of living for Tibetans, so the present repressive and punitive policies are literally tearing out the hearts of the Ngaba people.*[198]

Chinese policies in Tibet have led to executions, torture, imprisonment, destruction of religious institutions, political indoctrination, expulsion of monks and nuns from monasteries and nunneries, the banning of religious ceremonies, restrictions on the number of monks in monasteries, extreme disruption of the religious practices of average Tibetans, and counterproductive efforts to enforce loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party. This sixty-year assault on Tibetan culture in the guise of the CCP's brand of 'scientific materialism'[199] has failed to achieve the stated objective of ridding Tibetans of their devotion to Tibetan Buddhism and securing their loyalty to the Chinese party-state. It has, on the other hand, reinforced a sense of shared identity across Tibet and succeeded in convincing many Tibetans that the Chinese authorities bear their culture tremendous ill will. Tibetans increasingly believe that these authorities will not stop attacking Tibetan Buddhism until they have established complete control over it or driven it out of Tibet all together.

## Western Development, Nomad Settlement and Population Influx: Grasping with Many Hands

*Would it not be easier*
*In that case for the government*
*To dissolve the people*
*And elect another?*

*—Bertolt Brecht,*
*Die Lösung ("The Solution"), 1959*

August 1, 2007, was the opening day of the Lithang Summer Horse Festival—one of the most popular and well-known Tibetan cultural events of the year, attended by thousands of people from all over eastern Tibet and beyond. Lithang, in what the Chinese have designated as the Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, is a historically fractious nomadic area where Khampa herders pride themselves on their toughness and fierce independence. Kardze is home to Lithang Monastery, one of the largest monasteries in Tibet, and many other smaller active monasteries. In the summer of 2007, the climate was tense in Lithang. Five years earlier, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, a respected local lama had been sentenced to death, and he remained in prison despite local petitions for his release.

Tenzin Delek's arrest in 2002 was followed by a seemingly endless series of patriotic education campaigns requiring local monks to denounce the Dalai Lama and swear fealty to the Chinese party-state, culminating in authorities demanding Lithang monks sign a petition saying they did not want the Dalai Lama to come back to Tibet.[200] This further inflamed tensions in the area, and the local community was reportedly angry with the monks on the Lithang DMC who were carrying out the campaign. The intensification of Chinese policies, under the Western Development Plan, to force the settlement of nomads and fencing of grazing lands had also sparked an escalating series of disputes among nomads over access to land and water, some of which had broken out into deadly violence.[201]

That day, 53-year-old Tibetan nomad Runggye Adak climbed on the festival stage and took the microphone just as the opening ceremony was set to begin. He offered a traditional *khatag* or Tibetan blessing scarf to the senior lama of Lithang Monastery and calmly began to speak. To the surprise of the crowd, which included a number of Chinese officials, Adak called for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet and rebuked those Tibetans who had criticized the Dalai Lama (apparently a reference to the hated patriotic education campaign petition). He called for religious freedom, including the release of the Panchen Lama, Gedun Choekyi Nyima, and of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche. Adak then urged local Tibetans to stop fighting among themselves about land and water issues. (Subtitled footage of some of Runggye Adak's comments, filmed by a foreigner at the horse festival, can be viewed at: *http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/bold-public-expression-support-dalai-lama-led-imprisonment-tibetan-captured-video*.)

Security forces seized Adak and took him offstage.[202] A group of Tibetans tried unsuccessfully to negotiate his release with the authorities, insisting that he had said nothing that was against the law and only wanted to speak about the situation for Tibetans in Lithang. When that failed, hundreds of local people surrounded the police station where he was taken and demanded his release. Several days later, another group of Tibetans gathered to protest his continued detention until Chinese security forces cleared out the crowd with tear gas, flash-bang grenades and gunshots fired into the air.[203] Those who resisted were beaten with metal poles.

At least 20 Tibetans, including several relatives of Adak, were taken into custody following the incident. Adak was sentenced to eight years in prison for 'inciting splittism.' In August 2010, ICT reported that Runggye Adak's relatives had grave concerns about his health, that of his nephew Adak Lopoe, a senior monk from Lithang who was sentenced to ten years, and a Tibetan art teacher and musician named Kunkhyen who was sentenced to nine years. Both Adak Lopoe and Kunkhyen were imprisoned for attempting to provide pictures and information about the protest to 'overseas organizations' and charged with 'endangering national security.'[204]

As illustrated by the arrest of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche and Runggye Adak, the socio-economic strategies the Chinese government has deployed in Tibet for the past decade have become detached from objectives of poverty alleviation and promotion of sustainable livelihoods for the Tibetan inhabitants of these areas, and have come into intense conflict with Tibetan efforts to preserve their culture and traditional way of life. Policies such as the Western Development Plan seem designed primarily to achieve other developmental and political objectives: extraction of resources needed for the fast-growing Chinese economy; improved physical access to economically and politically strategic areas of the Tibetan plateau; commoditization of natural resources and features, including forests and rivers; expanded economic opportunities for inland Chinese migrants; and pacification of the indigenous population through demographic changes and socio-economic assimilation. The more recent overlay of policies with an ostensible environmental and 'scientific' basis have caused tremendous additional hardships for already marginalized Tibetan populations while achieving little in the way of environmental benefits.

## i. The Western Development Plan

Chinese President Jiang Zemin launched the Western China Development Plan in a speech in Xian on June 17, 1999. The initial emphasis of the WDP was on the acceleration of development in the western regions including the TAR, Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan (the provinces that cover ethnographic Tibet), as well as Shaanxi, Ningxia, Guizhou, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, and the Chongqing municipality. Altogether this area covers 56 percent of China's total landmass, and 23 percent of its total population. In 2002, the State Council stated the following objectives for the Western Development Plan: modernization; changing the 'relative backwardness' of the western region's outlook; narrowing the development gap between regions; building a prosperous economy, social progress, a stable life, national unity, beautiful landscape; and bringing prosperity to the people of the western regions.[205]

Party leaders explicitly linked the success of the WDP to the survival of the Party. Jiang Zemin credited it with "major significance for the future prosperity of the country and the (Party's) long reign and perennial stability," and on another occasion said he believed the strategy would "help develop China's economy, stabilize local society and contribute to China's unity."[206] Tsinghua University economist Hu Angang, who advised the government on the development of the WDP, was more frank, noting: "The worst case scenario—and what we are trying to avoid—is China fragmenting like Yugoslavia… Already, regional (economic) disparity is equal to—or worse than—what we saw in Yugoslavia before it split."[207] In another interview, Hu shared his view that China's west had to 'disenclave' itself, and he framed the strategy's priorities as being the integration of the western areas as a supplier of energy and water resources into the faster-growing areas of eastern China, and a crucial link in China's plans for regional economic and energy security initiatives in central, south and southeast Asia.[208]

From the beginning, much of the 'development' in the Western Development Plan has consisted of infrastructure—building of roads, developing hydrocarbon pipelines, massive water diversion and hydropower projects, laying of railway lines, constructing airports and communication facilities—geared towards facilitating the exploitation of the region's abundant natural resources and transporting these into the core of China's resource-hungry economy.

## China's Triumphant Achievements in Western Development

In January 2010, the China Development Gateway website published a list of the major accomplishments of the Western Development Plan up to that point:

2000: "Western Development" plan begins

2002: Construction of the "West-East Gas Pipeline" begins

2003: Policy of "Returning Grazing Land to Grassland" comes into effect

2004: Law on Promoting Western Development is listed on the legislative plan of the 10th National People's Congress

2005: Compulsory education tuition and fees become exempt in western areas

2006: Qinghai-Tibet Railway begins operation

2007: Ministry of Finance invests 280 billion RMB in the west to support key projects

(Source: China Development Gateway, January 4, 2010 available at: *http://english.cqnews.net/html/2011-08/31/content_8046585.htm*.)

As a result of the heavy focus on resource extraction and transport to eastern China, both Tibetans and many experts who have studied the WDP see it as disproportionately benefitting the relatively better-off areas of eastern China and those non-Tibetans with the skills and connections to take advantage of the state's mode of development. Given the scale and nature of these projects, massive state expenditures have been involved in the realization of the WDP. The government investment boom has ensured that the TAR and other areas under the strategy have enjoyed some of the highest GDP growth rates in the country. The nature of this growth in Tibetan areas, however, has been highly exclusionary, unbalanced, and likely to lead to increased dependency on a perpetual stream of assistance from the central government and other parts of China. Non-Tibetan migrants and settlers, attracted by the subsidy-driven boom, continue to disproportionately benefit from both the direct and tertiary economic activity induced by these projects. In contrast to the double-digit investment-led growth, agriculture—the sector in which most Tibetans work—is the slowest growing sector in the TAR.[209]

In the PRC's 12$^{th}$ Five Year Plan, which covers 2011–15, the infrastructure boom continues in Tibet. The plan includes a major expansion of hydropower, including the construction of 60 dams, a number of which are scheduled to be in Tibetan areas. The emphasis on damming in the Five Year Plan has sparked fears throughout south and southeast Asia about the impact on downstream countries of massive damming of the upper reaches of rivers with their headwaters in Tibet.[210] Within Tibet, there are concerns about forced relocation and environmental damage, particularly about the prospects of large-scale dams on the order of the problematic Three Gorges project.

## ii. Nomad Settlement

As part of the Western Development Plan, and in response to degradation of the grasslands of the Tibetan plateau and other areas, Chinese authorities have stepped up a policy of settling nomads. As noted in the previous sections, 2003 marked a new phase of implementation of the "revert grazing lands to grasslands program" (Chinese: tuimu huancao) that was begun four years earlier (see earlier discussion). This phase goes beyond the kind of technical solutions—eradication of pika (a kind of rabbit), subsidization of winter homes and animal shelters, planting of supplemental winter fodder—and the shift to the household responsibility system that was featured in earlier implementation efforts. As has been the case with many other centrally derived policies directed towards Tibet, the implementation of tuimu huancao has exposed a number of areas where the objectives and the underlying logic of these initiatives have served to substantially harm the interests of Tibetans who have no control over the manner in which these policies are carried out, despite the impact on their traditional livelihoods and demographic dominance.

The nomadic Tibetan communities of the northern and eastern regions of the Tibetan plateau have historically been better off economically and more independent of any political authority than the herders and farmers of the central valleys. They were quick to reassert their traditional lifestyle when the reform era afforded them the opportunity to escape collectivization, and many were able to achieve relative prosperity by resuming their traditional patterns of pastoral life. At the same time, for reasons of both traditional preference and religious belief, they have resisted the commoditization of animal husbandry, preferring to maintain the larger herds necessary for the production of dairy and wool rather than raising animals for slaughter. This has set them up for conflict with the agro-industrial approach of the Chinese party-state, as well as possibly its environmental protection mandates.

Tuimu huancao and ecological migration have been linked with several different goals, primarily the improvement of the region's ecology and the modernization of the pastoralist lifestyle. Evidence to date, however, suggests that the ecological benefits of these policies are questionable, while the social costs for Tibetan nomads have been extraordinarily high.[211] Under the forced settlement policy, the Chinese government has been implementing settlement, land confiscation, and fencing policies in pastoral areas inhabited by Tibetans. Herders have been required to slaughter or sell off their livestock and move into newly built housing colonies, abandoning their traditional way of life in exchange for time-limited subsidies that are insufficient to meet basic needs and are creating a cycle of dependency. Access to other employment opportunities is non-existent or limited at best, either because the settlement locations are isolated from other economic activity or, in the case of those in peri-urban locations, because the nomads lack the necessary skills and socialization for life in a distinctively Chinese urban environment.

Mandated settlement has also severed Tibetan nomads' intimate connection with their animals and the environment, and rendered useless their generational knowledge of animal and grassland management. In a 2007 Human Rights Watch report on the permanent settlement of nomads in Tibet, a Tibetan assessed the impact of this scheme on the nomadic way of life that has been practiced on the Tibetan plateau for 5,000 years:

> *They are destroying our Tibetan (herding) communities by not letting us live in our area and thus wiping out our livelihood completely, making it difficult for us to survive in this world, as we have been (herders) for generations. The Chinese are not letting us carry on our occupation and forcing us to live in Chinese-built towns, which will leave us with no livestock and won't be able to do any other work.*[212]

In December 2010 the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter, called on the Chinese authorities to reassess their nomad removal policies in light of the negative consequences on the pastoral populations,[213] a position included as a recommendation to the Chinese government in his final report to the 19th Session of the Human Rights Council (February–March 2012).[214]

The most controversial aspect of the new phase of implementation is the effort to remove pastoralists from the land entirely, turning them into what the government and state media call 'ecological migrants' (Chinese: shengtai yimin) or 'ecological refugees.'[215] In 2005, the authorities announced that 700,000 pastoralists had been settled under this rubric with a goal to settle 1,300,000 by 2013, including by removing the entire nomadic population of certain areas for a decade or even permanently. One area designated for complete depopulation is the Source of Three Rivers (Chinese: Sanjiangyuan) that constitutes 50 percent of Qinghai Province, including all or part of four Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures and the Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. Some 90 percent of the area's population of 600,000 is Tibetan. In one case in Qinghai, 2,000 nomad households from various counties were forced to settle at an abandoned prison site known as Tang Karma, where there was no drinking water or electricity. One of the settled nomads interviewed by Human Rights Watch for its 2007 report described the nomad settlement project:

> *According to the Chinese government, they talk about the need to cultivate farmland there. But Tang Karma is a desert where there is no electricity [or] drinking water, so it is hard to grow grain well. No[t] only that, those herders also don't have any experience of cultivating fields and growing crops… No new houses have been built, they have just put new doors and windows in the old prison buildings. The government made a lot of publicity about bringing electricity and water facilities but those who moved there say there is no such facility. The government talks about providing food subsidy eventually, but so far they got nothing…*[216]

Nomad removal and relocations are also taking place to make way for large-scale infrastructure projects such as dams, mining and other resource extraction, and infrastructure construction. Some environmentalists blame this approach, together with climate change, for continued grassland degradation, noting that the removal of Tibetan nomads has done little to reverse or ameliorate grassland degradation concerns.[217] One of the Party's most important infrastructure projects in Tibet is the Golmud-Lhasa rail line. The world's highest railroad, traversing the Tibetan plateau, the line is an essential link in transportation plans to integrate Tibet with China. The area of Qinghai province that it traverses has one of the highest levels of nomad settlement in Tibet.[218] The railroad is also an essential element in the plan to scale up and intensify animal husbandry: transporting animals to feedlot fattening pens, then on to slaughterhouses.[219] Construction of the Lhasa-Xining Highway, another major project, was done "without an environmental impact assessment or any environment protection plan" and resulted in "the destruction of the vegetative mat on the route of the highway, the adjacent vegetative mats were damaged as the soil was scraped up to build the road."[220]

Loss of traditional livelihoods has forced the nomads to seek other sources of income for which they either lack skills or opportunities. The Chinese government generally makes nomads a one-time payment for their livestock, and sometimes a stipend for a fixed period, and provides houses in 'socialist villages' with other families. The nomads are left without job prospects or steady sources of income, and are thrust into a new environment where everything must be purchased with money they do not have. Lacking skills and opportunities for other regular employment, they resort to collecting and selling *yartsa gunbu* or caterpillar fungus, a root that is in high demand for Chinese traditional medicine and can be sold at very high market value. During the summer almost the entire population in nomadic areas now scours the grasslands for this plant.[221] In some areas, local leaders issue passbooks that allow people to collect the root and then officials act as middlemen in selling it to make huge profits. There also have been cases of violent, even fatal, conflicts over trading as the fungus has become scarcer and more people are reliant on it for income. In one July 2007 incident, eight people reportedly were shot to death and 50 wounded in one such conflict.[222]

The commoditization of livestock has also produced other assaults on nomads' traditional values and religious sentiments. In addition to the use of yak sperm banks to promote more and larger animals, the Chinese government is

building slaughterhouses in pastoral areas and setting quotas for each household to provide animals to these houses.[223] Herders are punished by local officials for failure to comply with the order to slaughter animals. In Sershul County in Kardze in eastern Tibet, residents petitioned the local authorities against the building of a slaughterhouse in their locality. When the government rejected the petition, some monks and laypeople affiliated with Bumnyak Monastery wrote an appeal: "there is no greater harm to Buddhist religion than this. Even if we don't protect living creatures, slaughtering them without mercy is against Buddhism. This is the heartfelt wish of the people."[224] The official response was to detain the three people who submitted the appeal for eight months, fine them 10,000 RMB (US $1,574) each and place them under a form of residential surveillance. One of the three who was a monk was ejected from his monastery.

Religious leaders in other communities have also reportedly protested against construction of slaughterhouses. The most dramatic incident involved a privately owned slaughterhouse built in Derge County in 2004. After local herders came under pressure from officials to sell their livestock to the facility, and experienced a dramatic increase in theft of their herds, a group of 300 herders set fire to the slaughterhouse. According to eyewitness accounts, several dozen people were initially detained, but most were released. Those kept in custody were beaten to the point that at least one was hospitalized in Kardze. Following the incident at least five men remained in custody—their current whereabouts and well-being is unknown.[225]

One fundamental problem cited by academic experts and Tibetans is the Chinese government's failure to acknowledge and understand the wisdom and sophistication of Tibetans' traditional livestock management, which has allowed nomads to thrive for centuries. Wu Ning, a rangeland expert at the Chengdu Institute of Biology notes: "Simply focusing on pasture or livestock development fundamentally ignores the tight linkages between culture and the land."[226] Nomads are the objects of the current policy, which is driven from Beijing. The Chinese government has little or no experience in pastoral production beyond a simplistic and risky policy of reliance on overstocking followed by destruction in order to facilitate commoditization.

Traditionally, Tibetan nomads were regarded as the naturally well off. They, like most Tibetans, engaged in religious activities by patronizing monks and lamas for teachings, and were generous in their offerings to the monasteries. However, as the forced settlement has driven them into poverty and desperation, social linkages have broken down and traditional values abandoned in the face of immediate and urgent needs to survive. According to Daniel Miller, a premier rangeland ecologist who has spent decades studying the Tibetan grasslands:

> *[C]urrent policies and plans to settle Tibetan nomads goes [sic] against state-of-the-art information and analyses for livestock production in pastoral areas. This body of scientific knowledge champions the mobility of nomads' herds as a way to sustain the grazing lands and nomads' livelihoods… Certainly nomads need to be more involved in any process that attempts to transform their production system.*[227]

The new 12th Five-Year Plan that was announced in March 2011 sets 2013 as the year by which the campaign to settle all Tibetan nomads should be completed. As environmental policy expert Gabriel Lafitte has commented:

> *This amounts to a policy of parking productive people in slums, where a lack of the skills needed for the modern workforce leaves them poor, redundant, dependent and vulnerable to meaninglessness, alcoholism, and violence. This is hardly 'putting people first,'—the slogan of the new central plan. Nor does it respect the political rights that China's constitution and the rule of law guarantee to Tibetans.*[228]

## Ecocide

In addition and related to its punitive impact on Tibetan culture, China's model of economic development is also destroying the fragile and unique Tibetan environment without regard for the impact of that development on those who live there. In describing the environmental situation in Tibet, some scholars and activists have begun to use the term 'ecocide.'

According to the scholar Jared Diamond, 'ecocide' refers to the "willful destruction of the natural environment and ecosystems, through (a) pollution and other forms of environmental degradation; and (b) military efforts to undermine a population's sustainability and means of subsistence."[229] Recent examples of ecocide include Saddam Hussein's campaign against the Marsh Arabs in Iraq and the intentional deforestation of the Amazon.

Various aspects of Tibetan culture are intimately linked to the topography and climate of the Tibetan plateau. These include not only the yak-centered nomadic pastoralism of the Tibetan *drokpa* or nomad, the style and mechanics of Tibetan architecture and textiles, and the barley-centered diet of Tibetans, but also the pre-Buddhist Bon practice of imbuing various geographic features with spiritual qualities or inhabitation that was imported into early Buddhism by Padmasambhava. Tibetans have lived in harmony with their particular environment for thousands of years, and consider the Tibetan plateau to be a cherished place that has provided them with everything necessary for their society to survive and thrive—the antithesis of the Chinese view that the harsh and forbidding Tibetan climate is something to be conquered or endured.[230]

China's model of economic development has wreaked havoc on Tibet's fragile environment. The environmental damage in Tibet includes: destruction of grasslands; deforestation, mostly from clear-cutting of forests; destruction of biodiversity of flora and fauna due to loss of habitat and trade—legal and illegal—in rare Tibetan plants and animals; unsafe dumping of nuclear and other hazardous waste; damming and pollution of rivers and lakes; and terrain destroyed by unregulated large and small-scale mining and heavy industry. There has also been uncontrolled population growth in areas with limited carrying capacity. While some environmental damage, such as glacial retreat, has been ascribed to global climate change, much of it is directly attributable to irresponsible development practices employed by China since 1949—especially the concept of Tibet as a barely inhabited wasteland that prominently features in Chinese Communist Party discourse dating back to before the invasion. As one of the leading political and economic actors in Tibet, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been a key player in facilitating and benefiting from irresponsible environmental practices throughout the plateau.

The environmental costs of China's behavior in Tibet are not just borne by the Tibetans, however. Dust and sand storms, as well as flooding and rivers that have dried up throughout central and eastern China, are directly attributable to environmental damage in Tibet. Likewise, the headwaters of many of Asia's most important rivers—the *Yarlung Tsangpo* or Brahmaputra, the *Gyalmo Ngulchu* or Salween, the *Dzachu* or Mekong, the *Drichu* or Yangtze, and the *Machu* or Yellow—are found on the Tibetan plateau. The retreat of glaciers in Tibet—often referred to as the Earth's 'third pole'—has a global impact, as they have historically represented one of the world's most critical carbon sinks. Now, retreat of the permafrost threatens to turn the Tibetan plateau into a massive new source of carbon emissions.[231]

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While some Chinese environmentalists and policymakers have recognized the threat to Chinese interests as well as the global environment from the wholesale destruction of the Tibetan environment, these concerns have so far failed to demonstrably change the trajectory of the Chinese economic and population policies for Tibet. To the contrary, Tibetans who have tried to address these issues through community activism or even changing their own personal behavior have found themselves subject to official harassment and worse. In 2006, when the Dalai Lama called on Tibetans to stop wearing fur pelts as part of their traditional attire because of concerns about the extinction of large animals on the Tibetan plateau, the Chinese government forced Tibetans to wear fur at festivals or face fines of 3,000 RMB (approximately US$450).[232] In June 2010, three brothers who founded a Tibetan environmental NGO were sentenced to prison after they apparently angered a local police chief by demanding that he stop hunting endangered species in a wildlife preserve in Tibet. In 2006, the Chinese government had honored one of the three, a prominent Tibetan businessman named Karma Samdrup, as 'philanthropist of the year' for his environmental preservation efforts. Samdrup's lawyer claimed the 2010 trial was fraught with irregularities, and that his client had been drugged and beaten in prison. Samdrup was sentenced to 15 years, and when he appeared at his trial his appearance, demeanor and statements supported reports that he had been tortured in detention.[233]

A Tibetan professional who lives in Chengdu, but travels throughout the plateau for his work said it was his sense that, rather than becoming more aware of the need to protect Tibet's fragile environment, Chinese policy imperatives were driving an ever more aggressive approach to resource extraction. He described the damage being done to the Tibetan environment as an irretrievable loss of Tibetan cultural heritage, saying:

> *If the Chinese were to destroy the Potala Palace or once again tear down all the monasteries in Tibet, we would be sad but these were things that were built by men, and Tibetans could build them again. It may take a long time and some hardship but it could be done. On the other hand, once you destroy our precious mountains or rivers—things that were not made by men—we cannot rebuild those. They are gone forever.*[234]

## iii. Population Influx

Having lost control over their traditional lands and way of life, Tibetans have increasingly lost their place in the local economy to Chinese settlers streaming into Tibet to take advantage of its heavily subsidized economic boom. The Chinese party-state's development plans and infrastructure projects are urban-centric, and financing is channeled in such a way that Tibetans find it profoundly difficult to compete with Chinese migrants. Migrants arrive with built-in linguistic, social, educational, financial and cultural advantages that facilitate integration into the Chinese state-building project in Tibet. As Andrew Fischer, a development economist who specializes in Tibet, notes, "this situation arises precisely because of who controls the subsidies and investments and where the money is spent."[235] While the party-state is no longer mandating the transfer of population into Tibetan areas, it continues to provide ample structural and policy incentives that encourage the same effect.

The fertile Tibetan areas outside of the TAR historically have the highest concentration of Chinese migrants. These territories include the parts of Amdo that have been incorporated into the Chinese province of Qinghai, and a substantial portion of Kham that is administered as part of Sichuan province. As historic borderlands, these areas have always been a mosaic of population. Over the past 60 years,

however, the Chinese population has steadily grown and shifted westward. In the 2000 Chinese census, the total population of all designated Tibetan autonomous areas was 7.3 million, of whom 5 million were Tibetan. These numbers did not include the military or floating non-Tibetan population, however, and the actual population mix is likely more skewed toward non-Tibetans.

Population transfer and resource extraction has been expedited with the completion of the Golmud-Lhasa railway line in 2006, which transported 1.5 million passengers into Tibet in that year alone.[236] The railway has already had a dramatic impact on the lives of Tibetans and on Tibetan lands. As the 'centerpiece' and most visible symbol of the WDP, it has accelerated the influx of Chinese onto the plateau, exacerbated the economic marginalization of Tibetans, and threatens Tibet's fragile high-altitude environment.[237]

Director of the Tibet Autonomous Regional Development and Reform Committee Jin Shixun stated that about 40 percent of the passengers were tourists, 30 percent business people and the rest students, transient workers, traders and people visiting relatives in Tibet.[238] In 2006 alone, a total of 2.51 million tourists visited the TAR, almost matching its reported 2.7 million Tibetan residents, and this figure is expected to continue to increase. Such mass migration after railroad construction follows a pattern seen after the completion of the railroad to Hohhot, the capital city of Inner Mongolia in 1911. By 1949 Chinese outnumbered the Mongolians 11 to one. Tibetans describe the rail-borne influx of Chinese as a "second invasion of Tibet."[239] Another Tibetan has described the impact of population transfer through the xiafang campaign, the railroad, and the Western Development Plan as a "period of emergency" for Tibetans.[240]

The huge influx of Chinese settlers into Tibet has not only taken advantage of the jobs directly created from state-led infrastructure and industrialization projects, but has also aggressively moved into the tertiary economy such as restaurants and other small businesses, as well as most of the additional administrative government jobs. They often obtain jobs through informal networks of connections, or *guanxi*, with officials and construction firms that put Tibetans at an immediate disadvantage. Chinese migrants also have access to networks of financing and suppliers that are largely unavailable to Tibetans. Chinese-run tertiary enterprises have exploded to meet the needs of the growing Chinese community—helping to replicate elements of Chinese urban life for the benefit of the Chinese community. In his book *Written in Blood*, the detained Tibetan author Tashi Rabten wrote: "Each year the number of 'tourists' [from China] increases…and there are clear signs that a huge number of them are preparing themselves to settle in Tibet."[241] This radical change in the demographic make-up of the administrative and economic infrastructure around them forces Tibetans to adjust to the cultural influence of this "new majority" at the cost of Tibetan identity and culture.

With superior access to capital and other structural economic advantages, Chinese migrants have also been able to move into areas of traditional Tibetan economic life. In his essay *Tibet through Chinese Eyes*, Peter Hessler wrote:

> *In Tibet, Sichuanese have helped themselves to a large chunk of the economy. This was clear from the moment I arrived at the Lhasa airport, where thirteen of the sixteen restaurants bordering the entrance advertised Sichuan food. One was Tibetan. Virtually all small business in Lhasa follows this pattern; everywhere I saw Sichuan restaurants and shops. Locals told that 80 percent of Lhasa's Han were Sichuanese… In front of the Jokhang, the holiest temple in Tibet, rows of stalls sell khataks, the ceremonial scarves that pilgrims use as offerings. It's a job one would expect to see filled by Tibetans [but] all the stalls were run by Sichuanese… There were more than 200 of them—relatives, friends of relatives, relatives of friends—and they had completely filled that niche.*[242]

Because Chinese migrants tend to be concentrated in urban and peri-urban settings, their presence often feels even larger than the absolute numbers would suggest. This perception of ethnic 'swamping' is further reinforced because they carry with them the culture of the dominant power, the Chinese party-state, and in some ways serve as an echo chamber for the party's messaging and priorities. In order to accommodate this influx of Chinese settlers in Tibet, the Chinese government has initiated massive construction of

"rows upon rows of Chinese barrack-style housing" that has fundamentally altered the appearance of Tibetan towns, and which the authorities refer to as "a new highland city with national characteristics."[243] These uniform structures have appeared in most Tibetan towns and cities and are predominantly populated by fresh Chinese migrant workers and settlers.

The Tibetans' awareness of the sheer numbers and seemingly endless potential for Chinese migration reinforces an apocalyptic view that there are few things several million Tibetans can do to stop or even slow down this demographic onslaught. A report by a group of Chinese human rights lawyers on the March 2008 Tibetan protests found that a leading cause of the anti-Chinese violence that occurred in Lhasa was Tibetans' growing resentment as a result of these dynamics, particularly the "relentless trend of growing disparities" between Tibetan areas and Han areas and between urban and rural areas amid the process of rapid modernization and marketization.[244]

The influx of a huge number of Chinese migrants, all chasing the flood of state-led investment in Tibet, is eroding Tibetan cultural values and Tibet's environment. In the view of many Tibetans, and even Chinese scholars such as Wang Lixiong, these changes are mostly for the worse.[245] Many Chinese migrants have also adopted the same condescending attitude toward the Tibetans, as has the Chinese party-state in their daily interactions with them. As Lhasang Tsering, a Tibetan writer and activist, said: "I do not see that we have long before we reach the point of no return. I am not saying all Tibetans are going to disappear but by then there will be so many Chinese in Tibet, it will be no longer realistic for the Tibetan people to regain a Tibet for Tibetans. What has happened to the Native Americans, to the native Australians, is happening in Tibet."[246]

For successive generations of Chinese Communist leaders, Tibet policy has been animated by what can only be called an imperial project: the heroic effort to bring civilization and modernity to a wild, backward land by incorporating it into the motherland. At various times, this civilizing drive was manifested by a focus on trying to improve the material condition of the Tibetans as a particular group, even if this meant assimilation and loss of their own culture. Over time, however, the dominant policy has been shifting steadily toward a more exploitative colonization and an intentional targeting of culture as an obstacle to effective exploitation. The policies of the past decade, carrying forward to the present context, have coupled the CCP's imperial compulsions in Tibet with the insatiable needs of the fast-growing Chinese economy. China's galloping demand for energy, fuel and water, its increased capacity to physically control the Tibetan space and the political economy of bureaucratic capitalism, have subtly shifted the emphasis of policy away from efforts to 'help Tibetans catch up' towards a drive put the resources of Tibet in the service of the Chinese economy regardless of the consequences to those living there. The devastating impact of this change in attitude toward Tibet is felt as Tibetans, unable to compete with more skilled, better connected, linguistically and culturally fluent Chinese settlers, are increasingly marginalized by the political and economic forces buffeting the roof of the world.

## Threats to Tibetan Intellectual Life

In January 2010, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued a notice instructing all schools nationwide to organize events during the Spring Festival, the week-long Chinese New Year holiday, in which students would 'wish the beloved motherland a happy and prosperous new year' by engaging in ancestor worship of the Yan and Huang emperors, considered the earliest antecedents of the Han people. In noting this seemingly obscure announcement, the Tibetan writer Woeser trenchantly observed:

> *The essence of this 'congratulating the motherland' event is absolutely trivial: first, praise the magnificent native soil; second, praise the legendary early ancestors, Yan and Huang Emperors; third, praise the past dynasties' outstanding figures; fourth, praise the revolutionary martyrs; fifth, praise all exemplary heroes; sixth, praise the millions of common people…*
>
> *It is a shame that the more and more fascist China is brandishing the principles of nationalism and patriotism like two sharp swords, and is even abandoning the pretentious opposition to 'Han Chauvinism' during the*

> *Mao era. It is simply going to assimilate the various 'minority nationalities' under its control, and speed up the pace of the assimilation. One year ago, the Chinese Premier promulgated the decree that the traditional Chinese festivals, including the Qingming Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival, were to be turned into official national holidays by law, requesting the country's 56 nationalities to celebrate those three Han festivals on exactly those three days, thus, turning them into 'faces of China' just like the Han. Furthermore, today, they simply start with the 'babies in the cradle,' who have their own minority cultural background and inheritance. Since childhood, when they are just like a blank piece of paper, they are forcefully tainted by such ritualized events as 'wishing the beloved motherland a happy and prosperous new year' thus applying a type of 'Chinese quality' that is specific to totalitarianism.*[247]

This process that Woeser describes, of imposing a 'Chinese quality' on Tibetans through the process of education and acculturation, is emblematic of efforts to exploit even the most banal events to undermine the cultural core in Tibet and replace it with something designed and approved by the party-state. As Tibetans see their culture appropriated and remade into something unrecognizable, they face unpalatable choices of accommodation—and its attendant dilution of their culture—or resistance.

This section of the report explores current Chinese attitudes and policies toward education and Tibetan language, as well as the ongoing crackdown against Tibetan intellectuals. The Chinese approach to education, Tibetan language, and Tibetan intellectual life provides vivid examples of the party-state's intent of reducing Tibetan culture to a superficial museum version that supports China's political and historical narrative, rather than a living, organically evolving culture controlled by the Tibetan people. The party-state's approach to the intellectual life of Tibetans—education, language, literature and other forms of popular cultural expression—has evolved over the decades to the present doctrine that emphasizes loyalty to the state and acceptance of state-defined, rather than self-determined, minority cultures. The party-state's increasingly harsh response in designating virtually all forms of organic Tibetan cultural expression as tantamount to 'splittism,' and the resulting crackdown on Tibetan artists, writers and other intellectuals, has intensified the cultural insecurity of all Tibetans. The clearly articulated desire for cultural integrity from some of the best educated, most ostensibly assimilated urban Tibetans—those whom the Party expected to serve as its vanguard on the cultural front—has been a serious setback to the Party's ambitions. Instead of wondering why, after gaining a complete understanding of it, these individuals have rejected the ethos of China's assimilationist project, the Party has lashed out at them and moved closer toward a view of the Tibetans as irremediable.

## i. Exclusion through Education and Language

The party-state has always seen education as a critical element of its civilizing project in Tibet, and disturbing new trends have developed over the past decade. There is a growing indication that Chinese policymakers have determined that the state need not provide Tibetan children anything beyond basic Chinese language skills and sufficient political indoctrination to cure them of any 'separatist' ideas. Related to this is the use of schools as a control mechanism —to separate children from Tibetan Buddhism and indoctrinate them with the dominant culture, and to coerce their parents into cooperation. Finally, there is a growing popular Chinese sense of grievance at the 'advantages'—including test score and grade inflation, and reserved slots at university—given to 'ungrateful' minorities in the area of educational attainment.

According to a 2003 report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Education, the People's Republic of China spent only half the internationally recommended proportion of GDP on education.[248] In 2005, the TAR, Qinghai, and Gansu—all of which have large Tibetan populations—had the highest overall illiteracy rates of all PRC provinces. The national average is 10.3 percent while the illiteracy rate in the TAR is 44 percent. The quality of teachers and standard of education in Tibetan areas continues to be low, and the children of nomads and farmers have difficulty in obtaining access to education. The party-state has struggled to meet

the goal of providing nine years of compulsory education throughout Tibet. The difficulty of finding qualified teachers willing to teach in rural Tibetan schools, continued fees that place school out of reach, and structural barriers to access for nomadic families have been broadly identified as major obstacles to implementation of compulsory primary education.[249]

The educational opportunities that do exist for Tibetan children are shaped by ideological views that deny the value of Tibetan character, identity or cultural content. A report by Human Rights in China titled *China: Minority Exclusion, Marginalization and Rising Tensions* notes that Tibetan children are "subjected to an educational system systematically designed to deny them the opportunity and ability to learn their own histories and languages" and "to indoctrinate children and instill a sense of inferiority regarding Tibetan culture, religion and language relative to Chinese culture."[250] Tibetan children have experienced corporal punishment, ridicule and abuse for wearing traditional clothes or singing traditional songs in class.[251] Children are not permitted to engage in any religious activity, and those who are taken to monasteries on their own time have been threatened with expulsion from school. Reporting from a July 2010 Chinese government organized trip to Tibet, the *New York Times* described a new secondary school in Shigatse built by the Shanghai city government:

> *A portrait of Mao hangs in the lobby. All classes are taught in Mandarin Chinese, except for Tibetan language classes. Critics of the government's minority policies say the education system in Tibet is destroying Tibetans' fluency in their own language, but officials insist that students need to master Chinese to be competitive. Some students accept that.*
>
> *'My favorite class is Tibetan because we speak Tibetan at home,' said Gesang Danda, 13. 'But our country's mother tongue is Chinese, so we study in Chinese.'*
>
> *On a blackboard in one classroom, someone had drawn in chalk a red flag with a hammer and sickle. Written next to it was a slogan in Chinese and Tibetan: 'Without the Communist Party, there would be no new China, and certainly no new Tibet.'*[252]

Another controversial practice is the sending of select Tibetan children to China for secondary education. While this is a long-standing practice, it was previously common only for the children of Tibetan cadres. Now, however, other Tibetan children are included in the seven-year program, in which they are sent to Beijing or other Chinese cities and permitted only one trip home. "The program has a number of side effects which are likely to [create] a negative impact…[and] implications for the development of Tibetan language and culture…Furthermore, since these [Chinese] teachers do not speak Tibetan (many of them are unable to speak even standard Chinese, *putonghua)*, additional learning difficulties are created for Tibetan students."[253]

Among the most worrying recent findings on the state of Tibetan education are those of The Open Constitution Center or *Gongmeng*, an NGO founded by leading Chinese *weiquan* or rights lawyers. Gongmeng undertook a major study after the 2008 protests to investigate the underlying causes of Tibetan anger and resentment toward China. Its findings on education were deeply unsettling. According to 2007 statistics, "the average term of education in Tibetan areas is less than four years, and the high-school enrolment rate is extremely low" and "A majority of adults at the grassroots are illiterate."[254] The Gongmeng report particularly highlighted the weaknesses in Tibetan language and history instruction as problematic:

> *[I]n the course of our survey students and teachers broadly reflected that the largest shortfall of teachers in Tibetan areas today is in Tibetan language teachers. And furthermore, in interviews with a dozen or so elementary school students, when asked what was the most difficult subject to study, they all responded 'Tibetan' and the easiest to study was 'Chinese.' Even though they could speak Tibetan, there were however extremely few teachers who could undertake the teaching of Tibetan, and give in-depth explanations of the Tibetan language to the students.*
>
> *Secondly, there is a lack of systematic knowledge about their own nationalities' [sic] history… In the course of our survey, we learned that [in] current teaching materials in middle and elementary schools in Tibetan areas that there is an extreme lack of historical content*

> *about the Tibetan nationality themselves, not to mention any kind of systematic study of Tibetan history. Professor Awang Jinmei [Tibetan: Ngawang Jigme] from Tibet University said that some university students in the Fine Arts Department could make immaculate copies of Thanka paintings, but if they are asked what they have painted, they are unable to answer, they don't know who these people in the paintings are, nor what is the historical allegory. Wei, the teaching support at the Tibet Higher Teaching Training College, said that when he told students in class about the Heavenly Branches and Earthly Stems in Han culture, the students were very interested. When he'd finished, he asked if any of the students could tell him about the Tibetan calendar, and there wasn't a single student in the entire class who could explain the Tibetan calendar to him. The Tibetan translations of teaching materials from the interior which are used by students in Tibetan areas do not have separate syllabuses on Tibetan history and culture, which has led to a desensitizing to the transmission of culture and an increase in the numbers of Tibetans who have no interest in their nationalities' history, and it is extremely difficult to find any youths who have a thorough understanding of their history and culture.*[255]

The strong desire of Tibetans to ensure that their children maintain their language and receive a culturally appropriate education in addition to a materially useful one, has led them to adopt a variety of adaptive strategies. In Lithang, the local community has started a private initiative to encourage young people to study Tibetan. In July 2011, photos from an awards ceremony were posted online. They show students aged 10-18 receiving khatag and certificates from monks and local leaders, honoring them for their proficiency in Tibetan language and history.[256] In other places, Tibetan families pay monasteries a modest amount to teach basic Tibetan language skills to their children.

The lack of quality Tibetan language educational opportunities in Tibet has also driven both students and parents to take more drastic action. When Qinghai authorities attempted to curtail Tibetan language instruction in schools in 2010, there were large protests by Tibetan students and teachers. Thousands of students marched peacefully through the streets of Rebkong, subsequently followed by large protests in the Tibetan towns of Chabcha and Tawo. Tibetan students at the Minzu (Nationalities) University of China in Beijing also protested the same week. In Qinghai, the students were careful in their approach, deliberately avoiding the use of iconography in banners that could be construed as 'political,' such as images of the Dalai Lama or the Tibetan national flag. They also sought to discourage monks from joining the protests to avoid an extreme response from the authorities and articulated their concerns in the context of existing Chinese policies and measures. Hundreds of Tibetan teachers signed a petition in support of the student protests, demanding that the authorities respect the rights of minorities to use and propagate their language.[257] In March 2012, middle school students in Qinghai renewed their protests over new policies regarding the medium of instruction after they reportedly returned from the spring holidays to find new Chinese-language textbooks. Between March 4 and 14, 2012, thousands of students reportedly engaged in this series of protests in Rebkong, Tsekhog and Kangtsa counties.[258] Also in March 2012, Tsering Kyi, a 19-year-old student at the Machu Tibetan Middle School (in Kanlho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province), became the 24th Tibetan to self-immolate since 2009. Her school had been a hotbed of protests in 2010, leading to the firing of a popular headmaster and the detention of two teachers.[259]

Thousands of Tibetan parents of school-aged children have made the heart-wrenching decision to send their children out of Tibet to India where Tibetan schools provide an education within the Tibetan cultural context. The number of Tibetan children making the dangerous crossing through the high passes of the Himalayas each year has reached well into the hundreds, although the fortification of the Tibet-Nepal border with Chinese security forces in 2008 has had a significant impact on the overall refugee flow from Tibet.[260]

The *Gongmeng* report specifically highlighted the threat to Tibetan language as a key driver of frustration in Tibet:

> *The importance of language for transmitting a nationality's culture goes without saying, and there are many in the Tibetan language teaching elite*

> *expressing concern about the current status quo. As the ethnic studies scholar Professor Ma Rong has written, 'The formal texts of a people's history, and the recalling for later generations of the people's own epic poems of heroism, a people's astronomy, mathematics, medicine, architecture, literature and agronomy this collection of knowledge and culture is all recorded in that people's written language. It is therefore a catalyst for that people's traditions and culture, entrusting and manifesting the deep emotions that a people's elite groupings and broad masses ha[ve] for their history and culture. A people's language becomes an emblem of that people's culture. And therefore the future prospects of a people's language and script often receives a great deal of attention from that people's leadership figures, elite groupings and broad masses, who consider that the language and the future development prospects for that people are very closely connected.'*[261]

While Chinese law requires cadres working in Tibet to learn Tibetan and government business in Tibetan areas to be conducted in the local language, these requirements are widely ignored and Mandarin continues to occupy the privileged position. Tashi Rabten described an incident that took place when he was a student at Northwest University for Nationalities in Lanzhou in 2008. He and a friend put up notices about a book sale written in Tibetan on the campus walls and near the dormitories. Later they found out that all their notices were taken down while similar notices written in Chinese were left untouched. He writes, "I later found out that it was the government order to not allow any notices written in Tibetan to be put up. If any notice written in Tibetan is put up, the school police were given the authority to take them down."[262]

The late Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, the abbot of Larung Gar Buddhist Institute, wrote before his death:

> *Actually, the Tibetan language has no value in present-day Tibet. For instance, if a letter were mailed with an address written in Tibetan, it wouldn't reach its destination even within Tibet, let alone outside. In case of travels, no matter how literate a person is in Tibetan, he would not be able to know the bus timing or read the seat number on his ticket. Even if one has to look for a hospital or a shop in the county headquarters or a city, the knowledge of Tibetan is useless. A person who knows only Tibetan will find it difficult even to buy daily necessities.*
>
> *If our language is useless in our own country, where else will it have any use? If the situation remains like this much longer, the Tibetan language will become extinct one day… Rare in Tibet are schools where one can study Tibetan language and culture… Moreover, parents have developed the habit of not sending their children to school. This is because the primary school teaches Chinese rather than Tibetan. Even if the students learn Chinese and graduate from the middle school, there is no employment scope in Tibet. There is, of course, a slight opportunity for learning Tibetan. But the parents know that Tibetan language is useless in day-to-day life. Therefore, they have no motivation to send children to school.*
>
> *In the cities and county headquarters there are serious cases of people being unable to speak Tibetan, although both their parents are Tibetans. Many of them have lost their Tibetan characteristics. Moreover, Tibetan officials cannot speak pure Tibetan. One-fifth or two-thirds of the words they use are Chinese. That's why ordinary Tibetans can't understand their speech.*[263]

## ii. Attacks on Intellectuals

> *They have made everyone, be they close or distant, powerless, helpless and desperate. In daytime, they run like jackals. At night, they sneak like bandits. Without warning, they attack chapels and meeting halls in monasteries and homes and families in towns.*
>
> —*Tibetan writer Shogdung,*
> *The Division of Heaven and Earth (2009)*

The crisis in Tibetan language and education has been exacerbated by the persecution of Tibetan scholars and intellectuals through torture, arbitrary arrests, and lengthy jail sentences. For the first time since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, singers, artists, and writers have been the target of a drive against Tibetan culture in which

any expression of Tibetan identity in a manner not validated by the state is labeled 'splittist' and viciously suppressed. Since 2008, over 80 Tibetan intellectuals have been either imprisoned, have 'disappeared' or faced torture or harassment. These systematic and sustained assaults stifle Tibetan language and identity, and they thwart the assertion of Tibet's distinct civilization and culture based on creative expression, individual talent and collective voice. They also signal a growing impatience on the part of the Chinese party-state with its inability to maintain the loyalty of those who have arguably benefitted the most from its self-regarded civilizing project. Unfortunately, the party-state has not seized this opportunity for reflection on why these intellectuals are defecting, but rather has opted to persecute them and deny further opportunities to others who might follow in their footsteps.

The present intense crackdown against Tibetan intellectuals, artists and writers, particularly but not exclusively those working in Tibetan vernacular, is not new. In 2004, the Tibetan author and poet Woeser's book, *Notes on Tibet*, was banned by the Chinese authorities and she was dismissed from her position as the editor of the Lhasa-based Chinese language journal *Tibetan Literature*.[264] The authorities instructed that all her working hours would henceforth be devoted to political re-education. Later her blog was hacked and shut down. Woeser, who now lives in Beijing, has suffered repeated and sustained harassment since 2004, including brief detentions, periods of house arrest, travel restrictions, loss of work, denial of access to information and communications, heavy surveillance and censorship.[265] Since 2008, Woeser has focused on blogging and using Twitter to communicate her views, but her online presence has been the subject of continual attacks by Chinese cyberthugs and regular blocking by official censorship.

Since 2008, Tibetan intellectuals have expressed themselves in more diverse fashion than before, but almost any expression of Tibetan cultural identity is now subject to being construed as 'splittist' by Chinese authorities. This repression takes place on both the level of the absurd—such as authorities demanding performers not address their audience as 'Tibetan brothers and sisters' because this greeting is considered subversive to the 'unity of the nationalities'[266]—as well as more serious punitive measures. ICT's May 2010 report, *A Raging Storm: The Crackdown on Tibetan Writers and Artists after Tibet's Spring 2008 Protests*, provides detail on the cases of more than 50 Tibetans who have paid a price for peacefully expressing their views through the literary or performing arts. These intellectuals and writers include: Kunchok Tsephel, the founder of the influential Tibetan literary website, *Chodmey* (or *Butter Lamp*), who was sentenced to 15 years in prison on charges of disclosing state secrets;[267] Drogru Tsultrim, who was accused of sedition and supporting 'motivations of Dalai supporters' in his articles and whose Tibetan-language journal *Khawai Tsesok* or *Lifeline of the Snow* was banned;[268] Jamyang Kyi, a writer and singer, who was temporarily detained in April 2008;[269] Dolma Kyab, the author of *Restless Himalayas*, who is believed to be held in Chushul high-security prison near Lhasa;[270] Kunga Tsayang, a writer, photographer and blogger, who was sentenced to five years in jail in a closed-door trial on November 12, 2009;[271] and Tashi Rabten, the author of *Written in Blood* and the editor of "*Shar Dungri*" or "Eastern Snow Mountain," a collection of essays about the 2008 protests in Tibet, who is serving a four-year prison sentence.[272]

The authorities have also targeted Tibetans who work for international NGOs, which often can serve as an avenue for training and professional advancement for educated individuals in developing countries, and have severely limited the ability of these organizations to work in Tibet. Tibetan NGO workers are heavily monitored, enduring interrogations, threats and, in some cases, detention. Nearly every international NGO that had previously worked in the TAR has been forced to leave, with the effort to drive them out intensifying after the March 2008 protests. Those that remain often have a preponderance of Han local staff members and programmatic agendas that have a high degree of overlap with those of the authorities.[273] A similar squeezing of international organizations—particularly those that work primarily with Tibetans—has taken place in Tibetan autonomous areas of Qinghai, Sichuan, Gansu and Yunnan provinces. Tibetan staff of NGOs that remain working in these areas report new difficulties in getting travel documents, and have been told that they must quit their jobs in order to receive passports. They have also reported an

increased frequency in contacts by security personnel since 2008, including regular questioning and other harassment.

Despite the clear risks, many courageous intellectuals and artists still dare to challenge the Chinese government's narrative, not only about the events of 2008, but also about events of a more historic nature. Rinchen Sangpo (Chamdo Rinzang), the author of *My Home and Peaceful Liberation* and *My Hometown: Listening Carefully*, published two remarkable books inside Tibet about village life in Amdo from 1958 through the Cultural Revolution. In August 2006, even before the publication of these books, he was first arrested and tortured by the Chinese authorities, then released later that year. In July 2009, months after publishing his important works, he was re-arrested. He was tortured so badly in detention that when he was returned to his family one month later, his mental and physical status was severely altered to the point he "cannot eat, or drink nor move by himself."[274]

Another of the most recent and important cases of is that of the influential writer Tagyal, better known by his pen name Shogdung or Morning Conch, who was arrested on April 23, 2010. Shogdung's case is particularly significant because he was considered an 'official' Tibetan intellectual with views that were close to the Chinese party-state's. He was an editor at the state-owned Qinghai Nationalities Publishing House in Xining and author of many books and essays, including a 1999 article that denounced Tibetan's profound attachment to Buddhism as a stumbling block to development. But his last book, *The Division of Heaven and Earth*, was a scathing indictment of Chinese policies and actions in Tibet, and the situation following the 2008 protests in Tibet. In his book, he described the protests as "a sign of the rediscovery of the consciousness of nationality, culture and territory" and accuses the authorities of turning Tibet into "a place of terror" in their aftermath.[275] These events appeared to have led to a radical rethinking of Shogdung's place in Tibetan society. The book was an immediate underground best seller, despite the fact that it was printed without official permission. In the weeks before his arrest, Shogdung had co-signed an open letter—together with seven other Tibetan intellectuals—harshly criticizing the authorities' handling of the April 14, 2010 earthquake in Kyegudo (Chinese: Yushu), Qinghai. In October 2010, Shogdung was released on bail pending trial and there has been no further news of his case.[276]

From the experiences of Tibetan intellectuals, nomads, monks and nuns, students—Tibetans in every walk of life—this section has presented an abundant and tragic record of the process and damaging effects to the Tibetan people and their culture of Chinese Communist Party rule in Tibet.

[1] For more about this guerrilla force and their training program at Camp Hale, Colorado, please see *Orphans of the Cold War: America and the Tibetan Struggle for Survival* by John Kenneth Knaus (Public Affairs, 1999).

[2] See e.g. ICJ 1960 report, and Jones at 209, 211, 216–217.

[3] Warren Smith, *Tibetan Nation*, p. 391.

[4] Warren Smith, *China's Tibet?*, p. 36. Mao and his colleagues used the term 'rightist' generically to refer to anyone who was suspected of opposing communist reforms, socialism or class struggle. In reality, the term was applied to anyone who criticized Mao or his policies.

[5] Smith, *China's Tibet?*, p. 37.

[6] Hugh Richardson, *A Short History of Tibet* (Dutton: 1962), p. 201.

[7] Central Tibetan Administration Department of Information and International Relations correspondence with Arjia Rinpoche, June 19, 2010.

[8] CTA DIIR correspondence with Arjia Rinpoche, June 19, 2010.

[9] Mikel Dunham, *Buddha's Warriors*, (New York: Jeremy Tarcher/Penguin, 2004) p. 165.

[10] Dunham, *Buddha's Warriors*, p. 165.

[11] Wang Lixiong, *The End of Tibetan Buddhism*, in *The Struggle for Tibet*, (London and Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2009), p. 173.

[12] Interview with local official, cited in Jasper Becker, *Hungry Ghosts: Mao's Secret Famines*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998) p. 173.

[13] Arjia Rinpoche, *Surviving the Dragon: A Tibetan Lama's Account of 40 Years Under Chinese Rule*, (Rodale, 2010), pp. 137–38.

[14] Smith, *China's Tibet?*, p. 46.

[15] Translation by CTA DIIR, "Tibet's Status and Education Duty;" published by TAR Military Political Bureau; 1 October 1960, p. 6.

[16] Translation by CTA DIIR, "Tibet's Rebellion Quelled;" published by TAR Military's Committee for the Party's Document Selection, pp. 34–35.

[17] Becker, p. 166. See also Dikotter's *Mao's Great Famine* (pp. 114–115), where he notes that Red Cross inquiries about famine in Tibet—its only inquiry about famine in China during the Great Leap Forward—in 1960 were furiously rebuffed by China and characterized as "slanderous" rumor.

[18] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 30.

[19] Jasper Becker, *Hungry Ghosts*, p. 168.

[20] Statement of Lama Karma Tenzin in *Tibet Under Chinese Communist Rule: a compilation of refugee statements, 1958–1975*; p. 119.

[21] Becker, p. 166, 171.

[22] Becker, pp. 173–4.

[23] John Avedon, *In Exile from the Land of Snows*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 237.

[24] Avedon, *In Exile from the Land of Snows*, p. 263.

[25] Wangyal, Lobsang, *My Life My Culture*, (India: Ridak, 2007) p. 32.

[26] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 10.

[27] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 64.

[28] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 52.

[29] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 57.

[30] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow* at p. 55, 104. According to statistics collected by two Norwegian researchers, there were approximately 1886 monasteries and shrines in the Tibetan autonomous areas of Qinghai (722), Sichuan (992), Gansu (218) and Yunnan (24). See Ashild Kolas and Monika P. Thowsen, *On the Margins of Tibet: Cultural Survival on the Sino Tibetan Frontier* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), pp. 191–208.

[31] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 55.

[32] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 55.

[33] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 57.

[34] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 51.

[35] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 103.

[36] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 113.

[37] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, pp. 109–110.

[38] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 120.

[39] Smith, *China's Tibet?*, p. 93.

[40] The number of unnatural deaths attributable to Chinese policies during this period is a matter of great contention. The most credible figures and the methodology by which they were derived, are discussed by Robert Barnett in *Authenticating Tibet*, pp. 88–90. Jasper Becker also gives various figures, between 500,000–900,000 'missing' Tibetans, in *Hungry Ghosts*, p. 181. The true number is unknowable for the reasons given.

[41] Andrew Fischer, "Has there been a decrease in the number of Tibetans since the peaceful liberation of Tibet in 1951?" In: *Authenticating Tibet: Answers to China's 100 Questions*, p. 143. Edited: Anne-Marie Blondeau and Katia Buffetrille (University of California Press, 2008). Fischer notes that the actual rate of excess (i.e. unnatural population loss) was likely higher than the statistical one due to various factors, and that the excess loss in China as a whole due to the famine was 5%. He also notes that Qinghai Muslims who lived in the same area did not experience the same level of excess population loss. Id.

[42] Robert Barnett, "Some foreign newspapers have claimed that the Chinese killed more than 1 million Tibetans. Is this true?" in Blondeau & Buffetrille, p. 89.

[43] Mao Zedong, "On the Policies of Our Work in Tibet," in *Selected Works*, (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1977).

[44] Tibet Support Group UK, *New Majority: Chinese population transfer into Tibet*, (London: July 1995), p. 38.

[45] International Commission of Jurists, (Geneva: 1997), p. 103, citing Chinese sources. Hereinafter, 1997 ICJ Report.

[46] Zhou Enlai as quoted in Tibet Information Network (TIN), *China's Great Leap West*, (London, TIN, 2000), p. 29.

[47] See, e.g., the Panchen Lama's lengthy discussion of this issue in *A Poisoned Arrow*, pp. 67–70.

[48] Smith, *China's Tibet?*, p. 35.

[49] Smith, *China's Tibet?*, p. 33.

[50] International Commission of Jurists, *The Question of Tibet and the Rule of Law*, (Geneva: 1959). Hereinafter, 1959 ICJ Report.

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[55] TIN, *A Poisoned Arrow*, p. 105.

[56] Shakya, *Dragon*, p. 316.

[57] A powerful eyewitness account of the sacking of the Jokhang by a Tibetan woman Pema Wanglha, who was a middle school student at the time, appears in Patrick French, *Tibet, Tibet: A Personal History of a Lost Land* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2003), pp. 195–200.

[58] Shakya, *Dragon*, pp. 320–321.

[59] From the autobiography of Rinbur Tulku, as translated by Andre Alexander, *The Temples of Lhasa: Tibetan Buddhist Architecture from the 7th to the 21st Centuries* (Chicago: Serindia, 2006).

[60] Smith, *China's Tibet?*, pp. 127–130.

[61] Rinbur Tulku, *The Temples of Lhasa*, p. 6.

[62] Smith, *China's Tibet?*, p. 142.

[63] 14th Dalai Lama, *My Life My Culture*, p. 45.

[64] 1997 ICJ Report, p. 74.

[65] Keutsang Tulku, Yeshe, *Memoirs of Keutsang Tulku*, (2002: Paljor Publications).

[66] Interview with Palden Gyatso, 1997 ICJ Report, p. 74.

[67] Becker, *Hungry Ghosts*, p. 176.

[68] Becker, *Hungry Ghosts*, p. 176.

[69] Becker, *Hungry Ghosts*, p. 176.

[70] Interview with Dharamsala-based Tibetan nun, Ngawang Sangmo, 65, conducted on June 27, 2010. Ngawang Sangmo was born in Chung Rivoche and is related to one of the monks in question.

[71] Ch'ing Jung, "Socioeconomic Changes and Riots in Lhasa," cited in Smith, *Tibetan Nation*, p. 561.

[72] Catriona Bass, *Education in Tibet: Policy and Practice since 1950*, (New York: Zed Books, 1998) p. 20.

[73] Muge Samten, *A History of Traditional Fields of Learning: A Concise History of Dissemination of Traditional Fields of Learning in Tibet*, translated by Sangay Tandar Naga, (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 2005) pp. 17–34.

[74] Smith, *China's Tibet?*, p. 128.

[75] Shakya, *Dragon*, p. 347.

[76] Smith, *Tibetan Nation*, p. 548.

[77] Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows*, p. 350.

[78] Please see text box on Tibetan Red Guards for further explanation.

[79] Please see comment above regarding Tibetan cadres' return to Tibet during the Cultural Revolution.

[80] From Tsering Shakya's essay "Blood in the Snows," which first appeared in *New Left Review* 2:15; May–June 2002.

[81] Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, pp. 63–64.

[82] As quoted in *Hu Yaobang's Visit to Tibet, May 22–31, 1980*, Wang Yao, in *Resistance and Reform in Tibet* p. 288.

[83] Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, p. 65.

[84] Yao, *Resistance and Reform*, p. 287.

[85] Yao, *Resistance and Reform*, pp. 287–8.

[86] Yao, *Resistance and Reform*, pp. 287–8; and Goldstein, *Snow Lion and the Dragon*, pp. 64–65.

[87] While the number of Han cadres did decrease on orders from Beijing, the implementation of the policy was problematic and handled in such a way that the most technically skilled cadres left quickly while the least talented dragged their heels. See Goldstein, *The Snow Lion and the Dragon*, note 7 on pp. 137–8, for a discussion of this issue.

[88] See Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows*, pp. 395–396.

[89] CTA's DIIR, *Tibet Under Communist China: 50 Years*, (Dharamsala, India: DIIR, 2001) p. 47.

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[91] Goldstein, *Dragon & Snow Lion*, p. 84.

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[94] Ronald D. Schwartz, *The Anti-Splittist Campaign and Tibetan Political Consciousness*, in *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, eds. Robert Barnett and Shirin Akiner (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1994), p. 218.

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[98] Robert Barnett, "The Chinese Frontiersman and the Winter Worms—Chen Kuiyuan in the TAR, 1992–2000," (Unpublished paper presented at the History of Tibet Seminar, St. Andrews University, Scotland: August 2001), p. 5.

[99] Schwartz, *Anti-Splittist Campaign*, pp. 213–17.

[100] Schwartz, *Anti-Splittist Campaign*, p. 217.

[101] Barnett, "Winter Worms," p. 5.

[102] Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows*, p. 439.

[103] See *Cutting Off Serpent's Head.* TIN/HRW. 1996; and *Tibet: Human Rights and Rule of Law.* ICJ. 1997.

[104] *Cutting Off the Serpent's Head*, in which the full document is printed, including those passages that were omitted from the public version. pp. 150–68.

[105] *Golden Bridge Leading to New Era.* Publication of findings from Third National Forum on Work in Tibet, 1994, p. 74

[106] September 5, 1994 speech by Deputy TAR Party Secretary Ragdi, cited in Barnett, "Winter Worms," p. 10.

[107] The 'golden urn' was a procedure devised by the Manchu Qing administration as part of its 29-point plan to streamline administration in Tibet, and arose after disputes about the reincarnation of various important Tibetan lamas. Ivory lots bearing the names of candidates were placed in an urn and drawn out to reveal the 'true' reincarnate. According to the Dalai Lama, only one Dalai Lama was actually chosen via this method (the 11th) and it was never used in the identification of the Panchen Lama's reincarnation. For additional information about the use of the golden urn, see The Statement of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama on the Subject of His Reincarnation, September 24, 2011; available at: *http://dalailama.com/messages/tibet/reincarnation-statement.*

[108] Isabel Hilton, *The Search for the Panchen Lama*, (New York: Norton & Company, 1999), p. 200.

109 Shakya, *Dragon in the Land of Snows*, p. 441.

110 See International Campaign for Tibet report, *The Communist Party as Living Buddha.* Available at: *http://www.savetibet.org/documents/reports/communist-party-living-buddha.*

111 Hilton, *Search for the Panchen Lama*, p. 207.

112 John Garnaut, "Religious Ties that Bind in Tibet", *The Age*, July 3, 2010. Available at: *http://www.theage.com.au/world/religious-ties-that-bind-in-tibet-20100702-zu3q.html.*

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114 Arjia Rinpoche, *Surviving the Dragon: A Tibetan Lama's Account of 40 Years under Chinese Rule*, (New York: Rodale, 2010), p. 207.

115 Li Bing, "Dalai is a tool of hostile forces in the West," *Xizang Ribao*, Lhasa, December 11, 1995, p. 2. (Published in translation by the BBC SWB as "'Tibet Daily' Calls Dalai Lama 'Tool' of West," January 8, 1996).

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119 TIN, "Lhasa monastery closed after monk shot, 40 detained," May 19, 1996; available at: *http://tibet.ca/en/newsroom/wtn/archive/old?y=1996&m=5&p=19_1.*

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121 ICT, *The Communist Party as Living Buddha*, Washington, D.C., 2007.

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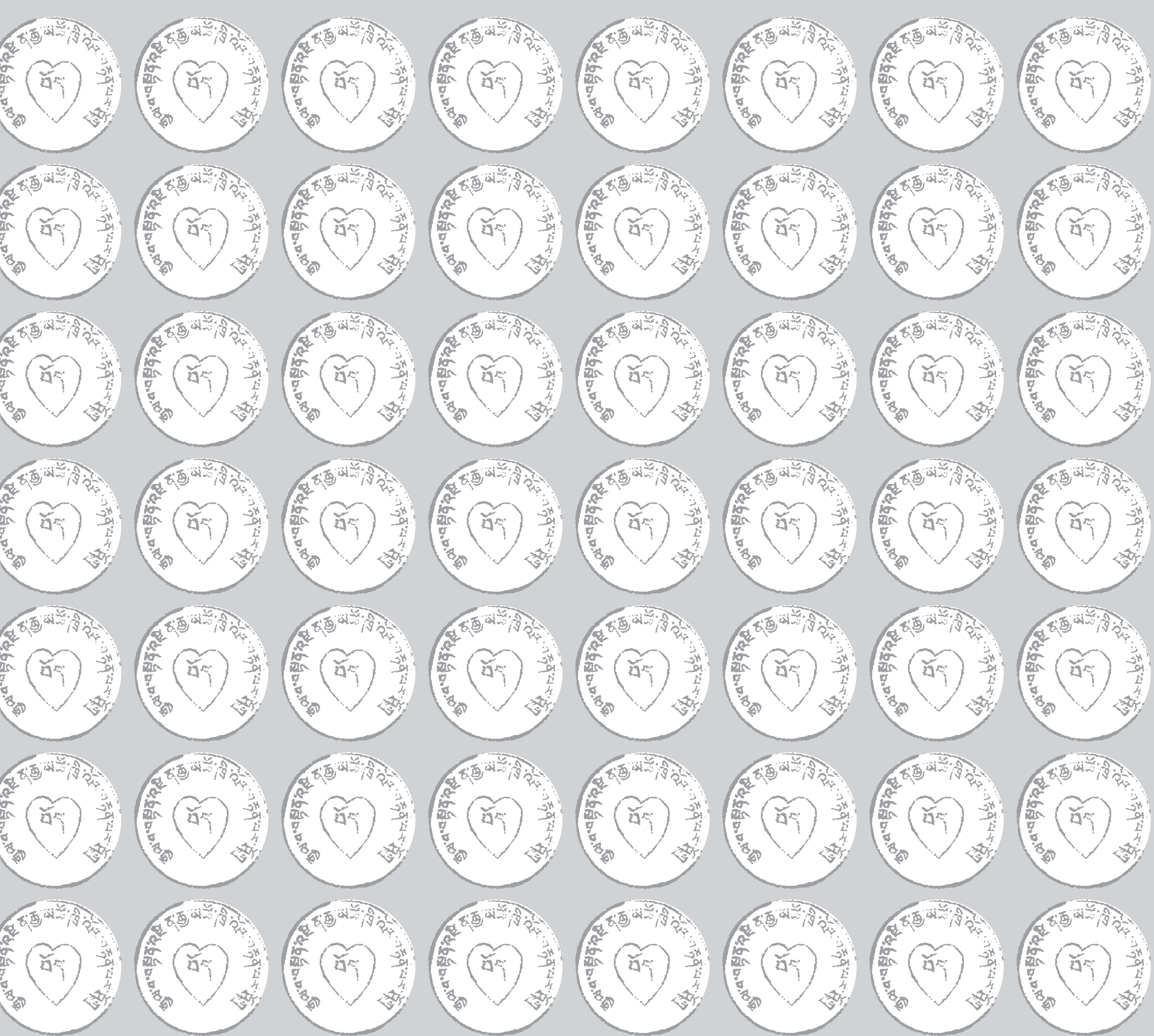
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# STRUGGLE FOR CULTURAL SURVIVAL

The Chinese process of imposing the cultural imprint of the dominant power has created a sense of both frustration and determination among Tibetans, both inside and outside Tibet. Tibetans living under Chinese rule today face limited, unhappy choices: acquiesce to Chinese dominance and lose some essential element of Tibetan identity; leave Tibet for uncertain exile; or fight back against the power of the Chinese party-state. Tibetans who choose the path of least resistance may exhibit a superficial adaptation to the dominant cultural narrative, masking an ongoing private effort to maintain cultural integrity. A surprising number of Tibetans are openly fighting back to preserve their culture. Given the swift brutality with which the Chinese authorities go after those who make this choice, the volume and variety of acts of cultural resistance and resilience that Tibetans are engaged in every day is remarkable.

Among the positive expressions of Tibetan culture are abstract paintings that employ Tibetan motifs in unconventional ways; rap songs that celebrate distinct Tibetan cultural markers; new forms of religious organization and community; films and novels that explore the Tibetan experience from diverse vantage points; and rinpoches dispensing the Buddhadharma through 140 character microblogs. Other attempts to push back on cultural pressure—whether student protests over mother tongue instruction or the self-immolations of monks and nuns—have a darker edge and signal the high, potentially dangerous levels of anger and frustration among Tibetans.

The contrast between these varied organic expressions of Tibetan identity and the Chinese government's efforts to manage both Tibetan and Chinese culture through dictates and propaganda is stark. This divergence between Tibetan self-expression and the Chinese government's response to it is particularly relevant to the party-state's latest campaign to 'strengthen Chinese culture'—meaning both the pillars of culture (as defined by the authorities) within China and the concept of Chinese culture as a 'brand' that can be exported to enhance the 'soft power' of the Chinese state.[1] The domestic application of this campaign has been redolent of earlier political campaigns, including the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign and the Cultural Revolution, in its targeting of popular culture deemed coarse or not sufficiently 'Chinese,' and its intention of reinvigorating censorship of popular media, particularly emerging social media platforms. The international application of this campaign is focused on elevating the Chinese party-state's narrative and influence beyond its borders—whether the topic is the party-state's domestic human rights situation or its perspective on international economic and political issues. This new initiative comes at an important time, and serves as yet another strong argument for why it matters to the international community how China treats the Tibetan people, given the vast space between the propaganda version of Chinese rule and the ground reality.

## Cultural Resilience

Despite and because of the crackdown following the 2008 protests, a new generation of Tibetans is developing a variety of peaceful adaptive strategies to reclaim their heritage and make their voices heard amidst stifling political repression. In doing so, they present an increasingly complex challenge to a Chinese Communist Party that has found itself simultaneously struggling to gain traction in the cultural arena at home and abroad. In Tibet today, almost any expression of Tibetan identity can be characterized by China as an attempt to 'split' Tibet from China. But just as Beijing seeks to enforce the narrow values of a police state across Tibet, a new generation of Tibetans is broadening the definition of what it means to be Tibetan and daring to challenge the official state narrative. The fear inside Tibet could be paralyzing—but Tibetans are not paralyzed by it. Knowing that they face torture and imprisonment, Tibetans still speak out to protect their precious cultural identity.

Tibetans seem to believe the truths of their religion will ultimately outlast the Party. As an anonymous Tibetan scholar has said: "It is now a question of survival—of whether Tibetan Buddhism can survive current levels of

repression."[2] Despite decades of official effort to weaken it, the Dalai Lama's influence is as strong as ever inside Tibet. Four years on from the protests that swept Tibet in March 2008, Tibetans continue to risk their lives to assert their loyalty to the Dalai Lama and to call for his return home. Tibetans in Tibet sometimes utter a simple mantra to visitors from outside: "Listen to him." Many young Tibetans also use a phrase in Chinese on their profiles on Chinese social media sites such as QQ and RenRen that translates as: "I learn to be strong in waiting for the great teacher to return from afar."[3] These are powerful allusions to the Dalai Lama that say much about Tibetan solidarity as well as the Dalai Lama as a symbol of Tibetan nationhood.

An important message of the protests and dissent expressed across Tibet since March 2008 is the desire for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Tibetans have risked their lives to assert their loyalty to him. The Tibetan writer and poet Anjam, who lives in exile in Dharamsala, India, said:

> *The literature of Tibet has been transformed since [March] 2008; it has taken on a new direction and is expressing new dreams. Some Tibetan writers have also taken on the responsibility of expressing their real feelings and facts about the situation in Tibet to the outside world. Many of these Tibetan writers represent the hearts of the Tibetan people inside Tibet through their writing. [Referring to several publications] they [various Tibetan writers in Tibet] speak about the failed policies of the Chinese government [...] and their writings strongly express their hopes for the return of His Holiness to Tibet.*
>
> *Because [Tibetans inside Tibet] are sacrificing or risking their lives to write these things, we should respect the value of their contribution—it can lead to a real understanding and connection of Tibetan people inside Tibet and those in exile. This dialogue is important while His Holiness is alive, but it will take on even more significance in [the] future. It is very important that the voices of those Tibetan people who have risked their lives and expressed the failed policies of Chinese government should be heard globally. We should read and reprint their writing whenever we can.*[4]

In a creative attempt to avoid the official strictures on monastic life, Tibetan Buddhist teachers have established unofficial monastic hermitages and religious encampments in eastern Tibet—known as *chogars*—that have created a space for Tibetans to practice Buddhism.[5] The Larung and Yachen Gar encampments are two the most prominent of these, but many others that are smaller and less well known also exist and attract serious practitioners.

Despite the obvious risks, since March 2008 there have been within Tibet a large number of unofficial writings about the protests of that year, usually expressing grief and sadness at the impact of the subsequent crackdown. These have been published in blogs, articles in one-off or unauthorized literary magazines, in books published and distributed privately, and also in the lyrics of songs sung in public places, uploaded onto YouTube or even as cell phone ring-tones. At the forefront of this resurgence of Tibetan cultural identity is a new bicultural, bilingual generation of educated Tibetans familiar with digital technology, with Chinese writings and official policies, and often too with unofficial accounts of Tibetan history that are banned in China. A common theme of their writings is the solidarity of Tibetans across the plateau and a pride in their distinct cultural and religious identity. An awareness of the historic upheavals in Tibet from the 1950s and a new sense of urgency for political change infuse their work.

The writings are often poetic in style, such as the articles included in *Shar Dungri* or "Eastern Snow Mountain," a literary journal that was banned as soon as it was published in Amdo in 2008. The writers of *Shar Dungri* who are from the Ngaba area of Sichuan, show extensive knowledge of Chinese and Tibetan law and policy, and discuss the sufferings of ordinary Chinese people as well as their own struggles against the state. (English translations of some of these essays are available in ICT's 2009 report, *A Great Mountain Burned by Fire: China's Crackdown in Tibet*, available online at: *http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-press-releases/a-great-mountain-burned-fire-chinas-crackdown-tibet*).

A related feature of the cultural resurgence in Tibet has been the development of new alliances and understandings with Chinese intellectuals. On March 22, 2008, shortly

## Commoditizing Culture: 'Disneyfication' and the 'Tibet Drifter' Phenomenon

Tourism to Tibet is rapidly growing and the Chinese authorities see it as a lucrative driver of GDP improvement in Tibet. While the tourism industry could easily be organized in such a way as to support both the preservation of a vibrant Tibetan culture and sustainable livelihoods for Tibetans, the reality of what is happening in Tibet is more complicated and less positive. Only some Tibetans have been able to benefit from the influx of tourists, because the largest cohort of tourists into Tibet is Chinese. The industry that has grown up to service them is predominantly controlled by other Chinese. While some of this is due to basic cultural preferences and market factors that cater to Chinese tourists, there are aspects of Chinese management of the Tibetan tourism experience that are deeply problematic from a Tibetan cultural perspective.

One obvious issue is the fact that the official Chinese version of Tibetan history and culture is the one that is provided to most tourists in Tibet. In the 1980–90s a number of Tibetans who had gone into exile in India and learned English had trained to be tour guides, and returned to Tibet to take up their profession. In 2003, after these guides became popular with western tourists in Lhasa and were caught giving a non-official version of Tibetan history, the Chinese authorities created regulatory barriers that caused them all to face major difficulties and some to lose their jobs.[6]

Likewise, the regulation of Tibetan monasteries as tourist destinations is conducted to achieve Chinese material objectives rather than in a way that is sensitive to the religious nature of the institutions or their role in Tibetan culture. Monks now must spend a certain amount of time carrying out work related to tourism rather than focusing on their studies or other religious activities. Chinese writer Wang Lixiong writes that in Tibet today, "All famous monasteries have to be transformed into tourist sites, while high-ranking tulkus are utilized as attractions for commercial investment… That is how they became a valuable commodity."[7]

In the Songpan area of Ngaba, which serves as a gateway to the UNESCO World Heritage Site at Zitsa Degu (Chinese: Jiuzhaigou) and Huanglong, five Bon monasteries along the highway contracted with Chinese businessmen to set themselves up as tourist sites. According to an academic study of this area, the businessmen paid for renovations to the monasteries and salaries for the monks, and shared a percentage of the revenue from tour groups. In one monastery "a designated elder monk would don a lama's robe whenever a bus of tourists arrived, and the tour guides would introduce him as a highly cultivated Tibetan lama who 'could go for 365 days without eating and drinking, and could fly from one mountain peak to another in an instant.'"[8] Tibetan practitioners

after the March 10 outbreak of protests, leading Chinese intellectuals and writers released a petition that appeared on several websites in Chinese, entitled "Twelve Suggestions for Dealing with the Tibetan Situation."[9] It was significant that Chinese voices were being raised in response to the way the Chinese government has handled Tibet policy. Points in the petition included: "We strongly demand that the authorities not subject every Tibetan to political investigation or revenge" and "The government must abide by the freedom of religious belief and the freedom of speech explicitly enshrined in the Chinese Constitution." More recently, as part of his Hexie Farm series, the underground Chinese cartoonist Crazy Crab has published several extremely provocative images honoring the Tibetans who have self-immolated and mocking the authorities' ham-fisted response to these tragic events.[10]

regarded these monasteries as having lost their sanctity. One Tibetan villager noted, "They (the monasteries participating in tourism) are no longer mysterious and the gods are no longer efficacious. We only go to the smaller monasteries now."[11] Monasteries and Tibetan practitioners also have preserved areas of monasteries that are designated as off-limits to tourists, and have made some effort to take back control. After the local Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) received complaints about the practice of contracting out for tourists, it was banned in 2002, but the RAB encouraged monasteries to engage in direct management of their tourist enterprises instead. Ma Jian, a Chinese author and painter who widely traveled in Tibet, writes in his book *Stick Out Your Tongue:*

> *Tibet was a land whose spiritual heart had been ripped out. Thousands of temples lay in ruins, and the few monasteries that had survived were damaged and defaced. Most of the monks who'd returned to the monasteries seemed to have done so for economic rather than spiritual reasons. The temples' gates were guarded by armed policemen, and the walls were daubed with slogans instructing the monks to 'Love the Motherland, love the Communist Party and study Marxist-Leninism.'*[12]

Another phenomenon that has gained traction in recent years is that of middle and upper class urban Chinese youth who 'drop out' of the high-pressure environment of Chinese society to drift around Tibet. While the trend started in the 1980s, it has grown in popularity in recent years, leading to the coining of a new Chinese phrase *zang piao* or 'Tibet drifter.' While these Chinese youth seem to take a less hostile attitude toward Tibetan culture than the party-state, some Tibetan observers have questioned whether they are engaged in anything more than a superficial Orientalism toward Tibet. In a series of blog posts on the phenomenon last year, the Tibetan writer Woeser expressed her reservations about the zang piao phenomenon, raising serious questions about their understanding of Tibetan culture:

> *As for the currently quite popular 'Tibet Drifters' and those middle-class inland people who call Tibet a 'spiritual home,' it is just like someone commented: those people are in fact quite unfamiliar with the suffering Tibetans endure; perhaps they are even totally oblivious to suffering. Some 'Tibet Drifters' have said to me that 'Tibet Drifters' do not specifically have anything to do with Tibet, no matter in which place they 'drift,' they are always the same. But I have encountered those 'Tibet Drifters' sitting at the main entrance of Jokhang Temple laughing, giggling and snuggling up to each other. Cigarettes dangle from their lips; they drink beer and sunbathe while watching Tibetans prostrating. They gaze and stare and while laughing and giggling, they also go and prostrate a few times as if it was just some kind of game, just some type of popular amusement.*[13]

The Tibetan writer Woeser listed details of unofficial books published in Tibetan areas since the 2008 protests on her Chinese-language blog, and commented that:

> *Any one of us could be a statistic. And we could also be a finer detail, a more robust part of the record. None of this is going to be over soon, and we must be clear, meticulous and thorough in presenting the undeniable and ineradicable truth about those whose lives disappeared behind the unknown and limitless dark veil during the blood and fire of 2008. Since then, there has been a constant stream of books, magazines, articles and songs in the mother tongue. Tibetan writers have broken through the silence, [beyond] the terror, and ever more of them are inspiring ever more Tibetans.*[14]

Early in 2011, there was a unique moment in the history of Tibetan and Chinese engagement. From his Indian home, the Dalai Lama held a videoconference with leading Chinese intellectuals in China. Later, he spoke online with

Woeser, who is married to Chinese writer Wang Lixiong and lives in Beijing. An image on her website shows her kneeling in front of the computer, weeping, with His Holiness reaching out both of his hands as if he was going to take her white blessing scarf, draped over the computer monitor.

Woeser repeated his words on her website, as a message for all Tibetans in Tibet. The Dalai Lama told her:

> *Do not give up, keep going. It is of the utmost importance that Chinese intellectuals and we Tibetans tell each other about the real situation, that we understand each other. Over the past 60 years, the courage and faith of those of us Tibetans living in Tibet has been as strong as a rock. People from all over the world see that there is truth in Tibet. The Chinese are increasingly aware of this… strong and powerful China is in the process of transformation. You must remain confident and work even harder.*

The monks and community around Lithang Monastery in eastern Tibet have continued to confront religious repression through bold expressions of their undiminished loyalty to the Dalai Lama. Although Lithang has been the site of severe patriotic education campaigns that required denunciations of the Dalai Lama, images emerged from Tibet in August 2011 of an amazing ceremony that took place a month earlier. The photos from Lithang show a sea of maroon robes before a vast stage as thousands of monks gather for a religious celebration. A large image of the exiled religious leader is at the forefront of the crowd, in a symbolic enthronement on a raised dais draped with white blessing scarves and against the backdrop of colorful thangkas.

According to an ICT contact in Dharamsala with connections to the area, more than 5,000 monks participated in the 10-day religious ceremony in Lithang. This was reportedly the fourth such ceremony, with others taking place at Serta, Dakgo and Dza Sarshue Monasteries, jointly organized by a committee of khenpos from these and other monasteries in the area. The ceremony reportedly began on July 15 in Lithang Monastery and involved representatives from other monasteries with historic or religious ties to Lithang. Many local Tibetan people, including local officials, also took part the event. On the final night of the event, when the monks engaged in a major Tibetan Buddhist *tsenpul* or philosophical debate, senior figures associated with Lithang monastery placed a photo of the Dalai Lama on a ceremonial dais, along with a photo of the 10$^{th}$ Panchen Lama, at the center stage of the event and the participants offered prayers and khatag to these photos in the traditional manner.

Over the course of the ceremony, there were also reportedly various campaigns made by the senior lamas from the area monasteries on behalf of the preservation of various aspects of Tibetan culture, including the Tibetan language —a subject of great importance to the late Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok. The khenpos gave speeches regarding the unity of the Tibetan people, with particular emphasis on the protection and the preservation of Tibetan Buddhism and religious sites in Tibet. They called on Tibetans to take responsibility for sparing the lives of animals and making donations to the poor in the name of the "long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama." The 'Language Protection and Preservation Association of Lithang Monastery' set up regulations for the participants, including requirements that they dress in Tibetan-style clothing and speak Tibetan in order to participate. A Chinese Central Television (CCTV) crew reportedly covered the event, wearing the requisite Tibetan dress.[15]

In addition to these expressions of religious faith, Tibetan intellectuals have been asserting their voices to push back on the narrative that the Chinese state has crafted around the events of March 2008 and other aspects of Tibetan life. According to an anonymous Tibetan from Amdo who is now in exile but who keeps in close contact with intellectuals in the area:

> *Educated Tibetans inside Tibet recognized the year of 2008 was a very tragic and dramatic moment of Tibetan history under occupation, because many brothers and sisters sacrificed their precious lives for the freedom of the country and the people… Tibetan people, particularly educated figures, realized it was impossible to build the space for survival of the Tibetan cultural identity under Chinese rule politically,*

> *[through means] such as shouting freedom slogan, public demonstrations and protests movement in future. They understood that there would be inevitable bloody crackdowns and information lockdown, as well as heavier restrictions, in Tibet if Tibetans continued to use the methods used in the 2008 uprising.*

It is not surprising that Tibetan intellectuals have viewed Tibetan language and education as a means of non-violent resistance and set about finding practical means of preserving their cultural identity through an emphasis on using the Tibetan language as a medium of communication and education reform in Tibet. A number of intellectual gatherings took place across Tibet in 2009, including the "Second Debates of the Tibetan New Generation" in Rebkong in January 2009, which brought together intellectuals from academia and the monastic tradition to discuss traditional and modern Tibetan culture. A similar debate took place in Siling (Chinese: Xining), in Qinghai province, on June 2009, with more than 100 participants from across Tibet. Siling was also the site of the fourth "Beauty of the Waterfall" poetry conference in November 2009. (Three such conferences were held in past years in various locations around eastern Tibet.) According to information received by ICT, more than 100 Tibetan writers, poets, and scholars from different regions in Tibet attended this conference, and the discussion crossed into the most intensive and problematic fields of education in Tibet, as well as contentious issues related to Tibetan literature and practical means for the preservation of Tibetan language.

During this same period, universities, major monasteries and educational organizations organized memorial ceremonies for respected individuals who had sacrificed their lives to preserve Tibetan language and culture. On October 30, 2009, Gansu Teacher Training University organized a memorial ceremony on the 20th anniversary of the death of the 10th Panchen Lama, entitled "Courage of the Panchen." In addition to the memorial ceremony, there were debates and discussions regarding the tireless efforts and achievements of the 10th Panchen Lama in the area of cultural preservation. Also in October 2009, the Sichuan Tibetan Institute in Dartsedo (Chinese: Kangding) organized a memorial ceremony for both the 10th Panchen Lama and the great Tibetan poet Yidam Tsering. At the event, a number of Tibetan intellectuals recited Tibetan poems in their honor. Tibetan students at the Minzu (Nationalities) University of China in Beijing, Northwest Minority University in Lanzhou, and Western South Minority University in Chengdu reportedly organized similar events, and these were well attended by prominent Tibetan writers and intellectuals including some who were subsequently detained for their works.

The movement for Tibetan cultural resistance has made effective use of emerging Internet and social networking capabilities. Blogs in Tibetan and Chinese started out with relatively innocuous cultural content but after 2008 became more focused on the rationale for and aftermath of the demonstrations. Tibetan writer Jamyang Kyi's post of an article called the "Diary of Torture" was reposted on a number of Tibetan websites before being taken down by Chinese censors. Websites that publish in Tibetan are automatically considered suspect by the authorities, many of whom cannot read them, and do not have enough Tibetan translators to effectively monitor them. For this reason, the Chinese Internet administrators have limited the number of Tibetan language websites that can be hosted at any one time and will often shut them down around important anniversaries or sometimes for no apparent reason.[16]

## Tibetan Writers

**The Self-Liberated Poet.** Dhondup Gyal (1953–1985) is widely regarded by Tibetans as the father of modern Tibetan literature. He wrote under the name Rangdrol, which means "self-liberated," a term with both Buddhist and modern political connotations. His most famous work is a 1983 poem, *Lang Tsho'I Rbab Chu* or "Waterfall of Youth," which was considered a radical break with traditional Tibetan poetic style and launched a literary movement as a critical means of preserving Tibetan culture. It was written two years before his death by suicide in 1985. In addition to its stylistic innovations, the poem is cherished by Tibetans for its bold praise of Tibetan identity, wisdom and creativity—particularly that of youth at the peak of vitality—and metaphorical use of powerful aspects of the Tibetan natural environment:

*…You are the water of friendship,*
*daring to leap from the ferocious cliff-*
*you are the water of the universe,*
*Courageously leaping into the valley below,*
*Proud to take on what is new*

*You have an open mind, strong body, and majestic appearance,*
*without arrogance or defilement,*
*your origins are deep,*
*having cast aside all impurities,*
*you have an unblemished mind, a splendor in your youthfulness,*

*Waterfall!*

*You are witness to history,*
*the way of the future-*
*the breathing and lifting of the snow land are written on every droplet,*
*the rise and development of the Land of Snows*
*shine in each of your rays…*[17]

The Tibetan band *Yudrug* or Green Dragon, released a song and video based on "Waterfall of Youth" in November 2010.[18] The aforementioned "Beauty of the Waterfall" Tibetan poetry festival and award are a reference to this poem.

**Banned in Tibet.** In an environment of intense repression in eastern Tibet, several young writers from Ngaba, associated with the Northwest Nationalities University in Lanzhou, were sentenced to prison on charges linked to a collection of essays about the 2008 unrest and subsequent crackdown in Tibet, the first Tibetan language commentary on this period. On June 2, 2011 the Ngaba Intermediate People's Court sentenced Tashi Rabten (penname Te'urang), the editor of the literary magazine *Shar Dungri* or "Eastern Snow Mountain" to four years imprisonment.[19] Tashi Rabten's sentencing followed more than a year in detention during which his whereabouts and wellbeing were unknown. Three other Tibetan writers who worked with Tashi Rabten on *Shar Dungri* were sentenced on December 30, 2010. Dhonkho (penname Nyen) and Buddha (penname Buddha the Destitute) were sentenced to four years, and Kelsang Jinpa (penname Garmi), was sentenced to three years.[20] The three, all in their early thirties, were sentenced on charges of "incitement to split the nation." *Shar Dungri*, "a sketch of history written in the blood of a generation" according to its introduction, offered a critical perspective reflecting a prevailing sense of despair and loss, but also a way forward:

> *The present contradiction between Chinese and Tibetans and their respective territories is directly related to the Communist state. Not only have the delayed consequences of the state's failure to resolve 'old issues' become the principal cause of instability in Tibetan society generally, an unthinkable calamity has been inflicted on the precious lives of ordinary people on both sides. The so-called unity of nationalities constantly proclaimed by the state has now reached the point of a 'you die, I live.' The attitude of the Red faction, which values individual lives in the case of the big nationality but crushes under heel the valuation of the lives and rights of others, is always going to provoke opposition, and the incredibly violent suppression, beating and killing of the fellow countrymen of a nationality swallowing back tears of grief is an episode that can never be forgotten. A society habituated to strangling the voices of the humble is one constantly filled with terror, fear and anguish. However, urged on by the prospect that by striving for human rights and freedom like a thirsty person seeking water, an unintimidated survivor may emerge in the wake of death, we fellow countrymen and women sharing each others' joys and sorrows, with the trauma of a first-hand encounter with hell in our minds, must apply ourselves to all the tasks before us as the responsibility has fallen unavoidably on our shoulders.*[21]

*Shar Dungri* was quickly banned, but not before copies had circulated throughout many Tibetan areas. Copies were among the books and publications confiscated and burned by authorities when students in Barkham launched a hunger strike following the March 2011 self-immolation of Phuntsog at nearby Kirti monastery.[22]

**Courage to Speak Out.** Tibetan writer Tagyal (penname Shogdung) spent nearly six months in detention in 2010 following the publication of his overtly political essay, "The Division of Heaven and Earth: On the Peaceful Revolution

of the Earth Rat Year," in which he describes the 2008 protests as: "a sign of the rediscovery of the consciousness of nationality, culture and territory."

Tagyal has achieved hero status among many Tibetans. His essay, circulating widely underground, is perhaps the most substantial critique of China's policies in Tibet since the 10th Panchen Lama's famous '70,000-character petition' addressed to Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in 1962.[23] Shogdung openly reflects on the inherent risk of circulating political ideas and scrutinizing the totalitarian state:

> *I have written of four fears, the fear of contemplating the cruelty of the régime, fear of the danger of government and individuals falling into extreme nationalism, fear for one's own life and wellbeing, and fear for the future, and at this point, I have one more fear. I am naturally terrified at the thought that once this essay has been made public, I will eventually have to endure the hot hells and cold hells on earth. I may 'lose my head because of my mouth,' but this is the path I have chosen, so the responsibility is mine.*

Tagyal justified his work in a letter written in Chinese to his employer:

> *Nationality matters are very serious ones. If they cannot be solved in a proper way, then violence and violent incidents may arise… I believe that the problem of the Tibetan nationality is complicated and urgent. If it is not solved in accordance with the people's thoughts, things difficult to fathom may occur. This is why, based on Article 35 of the [Chinese] Constitution that states that the society enjoys the right of free speech and of publishing, I put this right into practice and I expressed my ideas. My hope is that the Tibet issue can be resolved in the best way, by the core principles of kind heart, tolerance, freedom, equality, human rights and human values.*[24]

Tagyal's essay, which displays a remarkable knowledge of western political thought, ends with an explanation of the concept of civil disobedience and its applicability to Tibetans in China today. Tagyal also makes a passionate appeal for peace and for Tibetans to follow a path of non-violence. He pays tribute to the courage of Tibetans from all walks of life since March 2008, writing: "Last year's large-scale revolution was something I had never even dreamed of and that came without warning. […] When the Tibetan people came out of nowhere on an active quest for freedom, rights and democracy, it left me astounded. We are always going on about awareness, about courage, but for it to manifest visibly and tangibly in a short time was unimaginable."

## Tibetan Popular Music

In April 2011, the State Council Information Office sent out a notice for all websites to delete a song called *Shapale* or 'Meat Pancake' by Gamahe Danzeng. This catchy rap video, featuring a singer wearing a necklace made of a meat dumpling that Tibetans call shapale, was produced by young Tibetan exiles in Switzerland (available on YouTube at *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8z2_IE6NfSE).* It has been described as the first viral Tibetan video, and it is light hearted with no explicitly political content—China is never mentioned, nor is religion or any other hot button issue. It is word play with an underlying message of respect for and pride in Tibetan values, delivered in perfect Lhasa dialect complete with the honorifics that the Chinese Communist Party eliminated from the language. Yet the Chinese government felt the need to block this seemingly innocuous expression of Tibetan identity.[25]

The same confidence and upbeat sense of Tibetan solidarity on display in *Shapale* was also evident in every line of a hip-hop music video by the band *Yudrug* from the eastern Tibetan area of Amdo (viewable with English subtitles at *http://www.highpeakspureearth.com/2010/03/new-generation-hip-hop-music-video-from.html).* With lyrics such as, "We are the sharp wisdom that your speeches and lectures haven't reached; we are the smooth darkness that your flame and power hasn't absorbed," the song "New Generation" is delivered in Tibetan by a group of confident and hip Tibetan rappers. The lyrics not only evoke the poetry of Dhondrup Gyal, but also the defiant lyrics of revolutionary song writers from Bob Marley to Bob Dylan to Tupac Shakur. At the beginning of the video, subtitles proclaim it a song "… for the hard-headed people out there." The rap closes with one of the young men from Amdo in traditional

Tibetan clothes amidst others in hooded sweatshirts and sunglasses, flinging his arms out to the sky and dedicating the song "To our beloved and proud generation." Therang Buengu, a Tibetan writer who struggled with his own effort to express his authentic Tibetan identity as a college student in China wrote in response to an earlier Yudrug song *Milam* or "Dream:" "The Yudruk [sic] phenomenon shows not only that Tibetans can be cool, but that it is cool *to be* Tibetan. This is a radical shift. But not only does it show a kind of Tibetanness that is on the cutting edge of cool. It also makes it clear that a Tibetan image can be created and exist entirely outside of the Chinese imagination. This is a kind of Tibetanness that was made by and for Tibetans." In the words of Yudrug: "As I said what I wanted to say, I didn't turn into a mute. Our story has not ended here, it's just the beginning."

## Chinese Cultural Hegemony

The contrast could not be starker between Tibetans' vibrant, courageous and authentic expressions produced under tremendous cultural pressure, and the stale 'culture war' pronouncements emerging from Beijing's party apparatus. Coming out of the Sixth Party Plenum held in October 2011, the Party apparently has determined that cultural power is a critical element in its plan to develop China's 'comprehensive national power,' and an important tool in retaining domestic political legitimacy. According to documents that have been made available, the new cultural campaign has two primary elements: strengthening the Party's role in developing Chinese culture domestically, and spreading the influence of Chinese culture (as defined by the Party) internationally. Chinese president Hu Jintao gave a speech at the plenum in which he essentially declared China to be in a culture war with 'the West,' saying: "We must clearly see that international hostile forces are intensifying the strategic plot of Westernizing and dividing China, and ideological and cultural fields are the focal areas of their long-term infiltration."[26]

Domestically, the results of the campaign to date have been (1) a further tightening of censorship at all levels and across all media platforms; and (2) calls for improving the 'morality' and 'quality' of popular media. At a meeting of the All-China Journalists Association to explain the new culture initiative, a speech by propaganda czar Li Changchun demonstrated that, despite all the talk of cultural innovation, the Party's attitude toward culture remained essentially unchanged. Li emphasized the duty of media to the Party in terms of 'guiding' public opinion by "tightly embrac[ing] the main line and main theme;" the potentially conflicting priority of commercial development of the media, both to engage the public and contribute to Chinese GDP; and the relatively new priority of strengthening China's voice (i.e. the Party's voice) outside of China to facilitate "an objective and amicable international public opinion environment conducive to our own interests."[27] The current campaign also extends to a crackdown on what the party-state considers to be 'low' or crass culture.

Much of what is proposed in this cultural expansionism is not new. Even before the recent plenum, the government had already been moving in this direction, issuing orders to stop the production of popular reality television programs, bans on the use of 'time travel' in movies or television shows, and bans on certain forms of advertising.[28] Some observers were nonetheless taken aback by the fact that cultural promotion was the theme of the highest-level Party meeting at a time when China's leadership is facing tremendous existential challenges such as a critical political transition and a potential economic crisis. According to China analyst Damien Ma, however, this 'culture war' is best viewed as part of the Party's effort to "sustain the confidence of its own people—via nationalism, Confucian tenets, wealth, cultural renaissance, or whatever substitute that can be dreamed up—or risk the consequences. The war is, and has always been, about defining the soul of the modern Chinese nation."[29]

China's aspirations to 'strengthen' Chinese culture (as defined by the CCP) at home and use it to build 'soft power' abroad are the latest tacks in the Chinese Communist Party's post-Tiananmen quest to maintain legitimacy in the absence of any obvious commitment to the defining economic ideology that propelled its rise to power. The current leadership of the Chinese Communist Party—which often projects an image of sophistication, wealth, power, and even arrogance in their dealings with the world—is

facing irreconcilable challenges at home. This leadership has identified its top core interest as the preservation of the current authoritarian political system but is finding that other choices it has made—about governance, economic policy, justice, the natural environment, global integration, societal norms and rapidly changing popular expectations—are stressing the system. Leading commentators, including some viewed as close to and knowledgeable about the inner workings of the regime, have expressed concerns that the current system of CCP-led bureaucratic capitalism is reaching the effective limits of its capacity to manage a society and economy as complex and dynamic as present-day China, and is in danger of sliding toward something darker and more dangerous.[30] The recent sacking of neo-Maoist Politburo member Bo Xilai has only added fuel to internal and external speculation about the current internal dynamics of the party-state. Given China's present level of integration into the international political and economic systems, a chaotic implosion of the current regime—or even a prolonged period of internecine fighting—would have serious consequences.

At the same time, it seems clear that Beijing itself recognizes that it has somehow gotten on the wrong side of the cultural divide and senses the imperative of retaking the initiative if the CCP is to remain at the controlling heights of the Chinese system. Recent cultural events related to China have been either embarrassments for the leadership, or exposed weaknesses in the party-state's control over political and social trends. These include:

- The award of the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo, a Chinese writer whose powerful essays attacking one-party rule earned him a long prison sentence;
- The voluntary exile of Liao Yiwu, who fled China in 2011 out of fear that he would be re-arrested as part of an ongoing roundup of dissident artists and writers;
- The April 2011 disappearance and ongoing harassment of China's most famous modern artist, Ai Weiwei, whose political dissidence had become a thorn in Beijing's side, but whose arrest has only made him more famous at home and abroad;
- The proliferation of Twitter-like microblogs and their use to create political satire and other forms of humor, including an entire lexicon of terms that subvert official slogans—such as 'harmonious society'—to subtly criticize everything from censorship of the internet to high-level corruption in the Party;
- The public outcry, via microblogs and other online social media, over events such as the Wenzhou high-speed rail crash, the 'My father is Li Gang' incident,[31] and the Chinese Red Cross/Guo Mei Mei[32] scandal, to which the authorities have struggled to respond in a timely or effective manner; and
- The localized backlash against Chinese influence in countries from Burma to Zambia, even as Beijing has increased spending on 'cultural outreach' and is rapidly accelerating overseas investment throughout the world.

These particular cultural problems are combined with an overall sense in Beijing that China's cultural weight in the world is not commensurate with either its growing economic and political power, or its innate specialness as understood by the Chinese leadership. In addition, the Chinese authorities see not only the political rewards, but also the economic potential of cultural production and export as a huge untapped growth area.

On some level, the Party seems to have determined that the solution to the problem of what it sees as cultural decay is increased guidance from the top. It seems unlikely such cultural instruction from a Party that is widely viewed as corrupt and dull will be welcomed by a population that is increasingly accustomed to a fast-growing and incredibly diverse Chinese popular culture, including that found in cyberspace even behind the Great Firewall (the euphemistic term for Chinese governmental efforts to control Internet access). The use of phrases such as 'the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation' in *People's Daily* editorials on the new program may seem like a routine rhetorical flourish to many readers, but political analyst Russell Leigh Moses has noted that these are important keywords. They signify that "a 'national culture,' secured and delivered from above if hardliners have their way, could well be accompanied by a deeper crackdown on netizens,"[33] and others who disagree

with the Party's dominant narrative—including troublesome minorities whose cultural identity poses unique challenges to the Party's authority at home and abroad.

Those wondering whether Beijing's new focus on expanding China's cultural influence will push it toward a more humane approach in Tibet have little reason for optimism, given the trajectory of policy over time. As China scholar Daniel Blumenthal has noted, "Chinese officials are concerned to the point of paranoia that their vast multiethnic empire will not hold. And, following the dictator's playbook, rather than engage in any introspection as to just why it is that so many 'Chinese' do not really want to be part of China, Beijing blames 'foreign forces' and meddling from the West for their troubles."[34] Beijing's projections notwithstanding, events on the Tibetan plateau have unfolded over the past 60 years with the international community as little more than a bit player whose role has occasionally impacted events but who has largely been relegated to the chorus.

Whether that will change going forward depends on a willingness of international actors to find new approaches and tools on which to engage the Tibet issue and the Chinese leadership. Up to now China's response to broadly fielded and well-documented charges of human rights abuse has been a firm denial, which the international community has neither fully accepted nor taken the necessary steps to refute. As China has become more integrated into global affairs and has risen toward great power status, the list of issues on which the international community hopes to engage China has grown tremendously, and human rights has fallen further down that list. Perversely, this is happening at a time when policymakers are recognizing that China's failure to move toward a fundamentally liberal and humane form of government has global implications.

These contradictory trends are perfectly illustrated by the timid international responses to the current situation in Tibet, where Tibetans are facing cultural pressure on a scale that they have equated with the horrors of the Cultural Revolution, while the Chinese government boldly launches a new cultural campaign at home and abroad. Beijing's patronizing and materialistic attitude toward Tibetan culture was neatly encapsulated in a December 1, 2011, *Xinhua* article on the large sums the state had spent on Tibetan culture over the past five years. In a self-congratulatory yet defensive tone, the article explains how China is funding the preservation of Tibetan culture, and that the Chinese have done more to preserve culture in the past five years because expenditures are up six-fold over the previous five year period. Regardless of any assessment of how state-funded cultural centers and 'civil art troupes' might benefit Tibetan culture, there is no mention of whether these are the cultural priorities of the Tibetan people or the role they may have had in determining how these funds should be spent. There is no acknowledgement of the fact that this all-time high of cultural spending is happening while Tibetan monks are self-immolating, Tibetan writers are being detained or silenced, Tibetan language is under threat, and Tibetans are protesting the destruction of their culture in countless ways. But it is in the last sentence that the party-state's true arrogance and disdain for Tibetan culture is fully revealed. It quotes the current TAR Party Secretary Chen Quanguo discussing plans for cultural improvement over the next two to three years: "Newspapers, radios, and television sets will also be present in every Tibetan temple in order to promote advanced cultures there…"[35]

The same week China was engaging in this overweening self-promotion of its role in preserving Tibetan culture, however, a Chinese-language website posted a series of photos that featured a different face of Chinese rule in Tibet. Evocative of the worst excesses of the Cultural Revolution, the photos were reportedly taken in the Ngaba area and featured Tibetan monks and lay people in the custody of what looked to be People's Armed Police special units. In one photo, dozens of monks are seated on the ground outside with placards hanging around their necks that declare the nature of their 'crimes' of 'splitting the nation.' Another photo shows a large open-air truck full of monks with the same signboards lined up against the side, with their heads bent over the side and security officers standing behind them, being paraded through the streets—a tactic favored by radical Red Guard units during the Cultural Revolution.[36] No amount of government-sponsored 'performances by civil art troupes' can make these pictures look like anything less than occupation.

Given how awkwardly the Chinese government promotes its cultural agenda, and its self-regarding approach to cultural export, it is easy to dismiss the party-state's latest initiative as some sort of diversionary tactic or a kind of lowest common denominator political stunt by a party that is internally bereft of ideas on how to deal with the bigger challenges it faces. One only need examine the case of Tibet, however, to see that the party-state takes these matters deadly seriously, as shown in this section.

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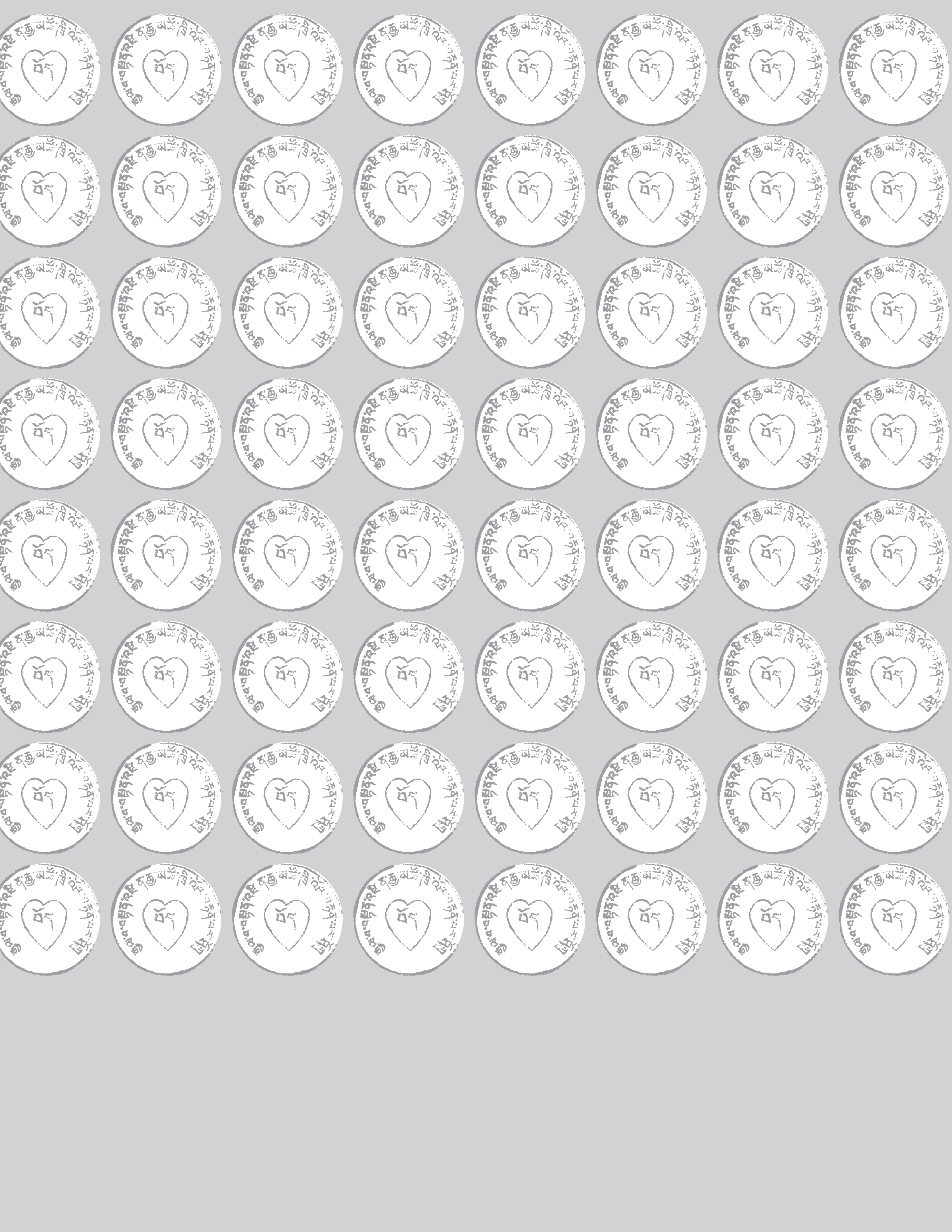
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# TIBET, CULTURAL GENOCIDE, AND THE GENOCIDE CONTINUUM

*[Genocide is] a form of violent social conflict, or war, between armed power organizations that aim to destroy civilian social groups and those groups and other actors who resist this destruction.*

*—Martin Shaw, What is Genocide? (2007)*

As the analytical framework for assessing the situation in Tibet, ICT has applied a definition of cultural genocide that has its roots in the original concept of genocide as well as the broader conventional international human rights regime. ICT expects that any finding that Chinese policies and practices in Tibet are tantamount to cultural genocide will be vigorously challenged by the Chinese authorities, and scrutinized by those working in relevant fields of scholarship and policymaking. The previous sections of the report have therefore focused on the areas where abuses of Tibetans' cultural rights have been systematic and persistent, and Chinese policies and practices explicitly seek to alter the essential Tibetan cultural experience. ICT has documented long-term Chinese efforts to fundamentally remake Tibetan culture, including in the areas of religious practice, nomadic pastoralism, and education and literary arts. It is in these areas that ICT finds Chinese policies and practices in Tibet constitute elements of cultural genocide.

**Any deliberate act committed with the intent to destroy the language, religion or culture of a national, racial or religious group on grounds of national or racial origin or religious belief, such as: any action with the aim or effect of depriving the targeted group of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities**

Over the past 60-plus years, the Chinese authorities have engaged in a deliberate effort to stifle a self-determining Tibetan culture in order to replace it with a state-approved and controlled version that comports with the ideological, political and economic objectives of the Chinese Communist Party. This effort has been pursued through intentional policies that are designed to fundamentally alter Tibetan culture in a way that robs it of its essence and denies Tibetans the right to control their own cultural destiny. This has not been a sporadic or intermittent series of unconnected abuses. Rather, Chinese Communist rule in Tibet has exhibited a pattern of repression, relative liberalization, vigorous reassertion of cultural identity by Tibetans, and renewed repression. This pattern is rooted in the application of policies that consistently privilege the Chinese party-state's interests over those of the Tibetan people. While the party-state likewise privileges the preservation of its political power in China, with resulting human rights abuses, there is a qualitative difference in the Tibetan situation because of the difference in ethnicity between the governed population and those who hold the levers of control and the monopoly on the coercive power of the state. It is this element of persistent targeting of Tibetans as a national group that marks the treatment as cultural genocide, and places the situation in Tibet within the genocide continuum.

Chinese policies in Tibet are based on a set of ideological and nationalistic principles that permeate the thinking of Chinese leaders and have taken hold on a societal level. The party-state's ultimate objective in pursuing these policies is to break down the national identity of Tibetans and replace it with Chinese national identity. It is for this reason patriotic education that emphasizes loyalty oaths to the party-state remains such a strong feature of Chinese rule in Tibet. This is also the reason cultural repression has been most visible and most intensely felt by Tibetans in the areas that form the core of Tibetan identity: language and education, cultural values, patterns of livelihood, cultural expression, and the practice of Tibetan Buddhism.

**Destroying, or preventing the use of, libraries, museums, schools, historical monuments, places of worship or other cultural institutions and objects of the group**

The Chinese government's assault on religion in Tibet began with the massive physical destruction of Tibetan temples and monasteries, and the desecration and sales of images, artworks and religious books in the 1950s. Although many monasteries and temples have been rebuilt since the 1980s, including with some government funding, much of what was destroyed or removed is not replaceable. The loss of transmission of the Dharma from one generation to the next, and the unavailability of so many lineage holders inside Tibet has weakened Tibetan Buddhist institutions and scholarship. The Chinese government's systematic, ongoing and intentional cultural destruction in Tibet has focused on undermining and controlling Tibetan Buddhism as practiced by the vast majority of Tibetans.

They have accomplished this through: intense regulation and control over monastic and other religious institutions; a range of policies that actively discourage average Tibetans from engaging in religious practice; patriotic education, propaganda and other political campaigns that are in fundamental opposition to the basic tenets of Tibetan Buddhism; manipulation of factions within Tibetan Buddhism in order to exacerbate internal divisions; and overt repression, including rhetorical attacks on Tibetan religious leaders, and the public humiliation, detention, imprisonment, torture, collective punishment and killing of religious leaders and adherents. These policies and practices have violated not only the promises of religious freedom in the Chinese constitution, but also the guarantees of freedom of religion under Article 18 and minority rights under Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which China has signed but not ratified.[1]

**Dispossession of lands, territories or resources; forced population transfer with the aim or effect of violating or undermining any rights of the targeted group; and forced assimilation or integration**

Chinese policies have targeted culturally distinct Tibetan pastoralists through forced sedentarization and other policies, including poorly developed and implemented environmental protection efforts, that have not only deprived them of their lands and livelihoods but also of an intimate connection to the Tibetan environment that has existed for 3000 years. Through the application of economic development policies that are heavily reliant on extractive industry and infrastructure, and the in-migration of a large number of non-Tibetans, the Chinese party-state has deprived Tibetans of control over their own land and future, and threatens to make them a cultural and demographic minority in their own land. These policies have endangered precious flora and fauna found only in the unique Tibetan environment, and are threatening to create broader ecological consequences for the entire Asian continent. The economic benefits of this Chinese development model have accrued primarily to non-Tibetans while Tibetans have paid a steep price in terms of cultural and environmental loss.

Tibetans' role as the stewards of this fragile and unique environment for three millennia has been summarily disregarded in order to advance the interests of the party-state. These policies and practices specifically violate Tibetans' rights to appropriate economic development as articulated under a variety of international legal instruments, including: common Article 1 of the ICCPR and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which China has ratified; and articles 12, 13 and 15 of the ICCPR, and articles 6, 11 and 12 of the ICESCR.[2] China has been repeatedly cited by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and various special mechanisms of the United Nations Human Rights Council (and its predecessor entity) for its failure to meet international obligations regarding Tibetans and other minorities in the area of development.[3]

### Prohibiting the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group

The Chinese party-state has implemented a range of policies that target the intellectual and non-religious cultural life of Tibetans. These policies include: the denial of certain linguistic rights, including the right to develop and use the Tibetan language as the language of commerce, education and administration in Tibetan areas; the imposition of the Chinese language and a self-serving educational curriculum on Tibetan children, while simultaneously denying them opportunities for cultural development and expression; the denial of publication and other cultural expression for Tibetan language writers whose work challenges or runs contrary to the party-state's defined narrative; the arrest and torture of writers, artists and others who engage in cultural expression that challenges the party-state; and the 'Disneyfication' of Tibetan culture in a fashion that trivializes and commoditizes it, primarily for the benefit of non-Tibetans. To the extent that Tibetan culture is valued at all by the party-state, it is primarily for commercial or political purposes. These policies and practices have violated Tibetans' rights under the ICCPR (especially articles 18, 19, 21 and 27) and the ICESCR (especially articles 6, 13 and 15), as well as under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (September 2007; China voted in favor), and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992; adopted by acclamation). China has rebuffed calls by UN Special Rapporteurs on Education, Cultural Rights, and Racism to respect the linguistic rights of the Tibetan people.[4]

### Propaganda designed to promote or incite racial or ethnic discrimination directed against the targeted group

The constant barrage of negative commentary about the Tibetan community, especially for domestic Chinese audiences, has been a key driver of the deterioration of relations between Tibetans and Chinese at both the societal and official levels. The party-state has engaged in a continual policy and propaganda effort that characterizes Tibetan culture as backward and something to be remediated through a state-directed modernization process. Their most revered spiritual leader is personally attacked in the most disrespectful terms, and Tibetans are accused of disloyalty to the Chinese state when they assert their identity in an unsanctioned fashion. Unsurprisingly, Tibetans have been targeted for both official punishment and societal ostracism. Even the most positive portrayals of Tibetans in the Chinese media, tend to be patronizing images of 'model' ethnic minorities, grateful to the CCP for 'liberating' Tibet from 'dark feudalism.' In the aftermath of the ongoing wave of self-immolations, the tone and specific content of the propaganda directed against Tibetans in general and the Dalai Lama in particular has become even more strident. Chinese authorities have referred to self-immolating Tibetans as 'terrorists' or mentally ill, and have compared the Dalai Lama's policies to those of the Nazis.

The unrelenting and generally unchallenged negative stereotypes of Tibetans that appear in the Chinese media have shaped a popular consciousness in China that is highly antagonistic towards Tibetans and their cultural aspirations. Most Chinese lack any empathy for the Tibetans' struggles to preserve their culture, since they are continually given only selective and stilted information regarding the history of Tibetan involvement with the Chinese state. Growing nationalism in China, nurtured by the party-state as an alternative pillar of legitimacy, has further heightened the sensitivities of many Chinese to any criticism of China's policies in Tibet.

## The Genocide Continuum

Cultural genocide does not exist in isolation; rather, it occurs in an environment where dynamics between the victims and perpetrators are constantly shifting. Genocide scholars have identified certain risk factors—such as, a history of acts of genocide, unprecedented communal tensions, and officially sanctioned statements that provoke prejudice—as warning signs that have preceded past genocidal outbreaks.[5] These risk factors are currently present in Tibet, increasingly so since March 2008. They are often

manifested and most deeply felt by Tibetans in culturally specific terms: the vituperative rhetorical attacks on the Dalai Lama and systematic efforts to undermine religious institutions; the imposition of a model of economic and social development over which Tibetans have no control or input; the increasing dominance of Chinese as the language of commerce, education and official communication throughout ethnographic Tibet; and an oppressive security presence that persistently responds to peaceful assertions of cultural identity with overwhelming force. The Chinese government's pervasive control apparatus and its means to provide incentives for Tibetan cooperation mitigate the occurrence of conventional genocide in Tibet at this time. Nonetheless, these same polices and practices have served to exacerbate and feed into a highly unstable dynamic across the Tibetan plateau.

**Severe and systemic state repression.** Scholars have identified warning signs related to severe and systemic state repression: the imposition of emergency measures; restrictions on civil liberties; the banning or harassing of organizations outside state control; arbitrary detention and large-scale roundups of civilians; use or increased use of torture as state policy; and outward flows of internally displaced persons or refugees. These have all been features of Chinese rule in Tibet since 1949 at various times, including post-2008 up to the present. Since 2008, Lhasa and other areas have been placed under security situations tantamount to martial law. Depictions of the security deployment in Lhasa by Tibetan and non-Tibetan observers alike include: heavily armed patrols that sweep through Tibetan areas of the city; snipers on the roofs of buildings surrounding the major Buddhist pilgrimage sites; unannounced searches of private residences; and large shows of force by 'special' police units designated to combat terrorism.

Tibetans across the plateau have experienced harsh restrictions of their rights to freedom of speech, assembly and religion, as well as large-scale roundups of civilians, such as those that have occurred in the Ngaba area since August 2011, and the use of live ammunition in crowds in January 2012.[6] The primary Tibetan cultural platform that is ostensibly outside state control—monasteries—has been subjected to an escalating series of regulations to restrict independent activity, and an increased physical presence of state security. Documented reports indicate that torture and ill treatment of Tibetan detainees is brutal and endemic, and includes deaths in custody. Refugee flows out of Tibet have continued but have been limited due to a concerted effort on the part of Chinese authorities to seal the border and apprehend Tibetans before they cross into Nepal. This effort has been accompanied by a renewed push to have refugees forcibly returned to Chinese custody after they have crossed the international border. China's attempt to create a hostile environment for fleeing Tibetans, including its encouraging other states to return refugees, is a clear violation of the principle of *nonrefoulement* upon which international refugee law is based.

**A history of genocide and inter-communal violence.** Genocide is often dependent on pre-existing patterns of state behavior and relations with society. From the time of the International Commission of Jurists' 1959 and 1960 reports, which found *prima facie* evidence of acts of genocide in Tibet, up to the recent assertions of the Dalai Lama and others of an ongoing cultural genocide in Tibet, genocide has been a feature of the discourse around Chinese rule of Tibet. While imperial projects of all ideological stripes have been implicated in genocide, the ideological extremism of Marxism as envisioned by Mao Zedong has resulted in catastrophic human suffering and loss of life. While the Chinese people were themselves brutalized by Maoist political campaigns such as the Great Leap Forward and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the principle and genocidal distinction with regard to Tibet was the targeting of a vulnerable minority by an oppressive majority using its monopoly on the coercive authority of the party-state.[7]

Since 2008, inter-communal violence has sharply increased and has the dangerous potential to grow because of the large influx of Chinese migrants into Tibet, the economic marginalization of Tibetans, and intense cultural repression. For the most part, Tibetans have adhered to the exhortations of the Dalai Lama to remain non-violent in their resistance to Chinese intimidation. Beijing has responded to this largely non-violent resistance with overwhelming force. Such strained inter-communal rela-

tions are typically the result of a long history of hostility and applied violence, and that is certainly the well-documented case of modern Chinese rule in Tibet.

**Mobilization along lines of community cleavage.** A healthy plural society provides opportunities for its members to engage in communal association with ethnic or co-religious confederates, as well as encouraging a range of cross-cutting inter-communal forums for voluntary association that help to develop a feeling of connectedness across communal lines. An integral element of developing such a healthy plural society is the ability of various constituencies to achieve representation within the economic and political spheres. When this representational function breaks down, and political and economic power is exclusively or predominately the province of a single group, there is heightened potential for inter-communal violence. Such violence typically takes the form of a spiral of attack and reprisal involving state security forces under the control of the dominant group. This is particularly true where such domination by one group is a product of state policy and it is perceived by the under-represented group to come at its expense.

A recent example of how this phenomenon exists in Tibet is the violence directed at Han and Hui shopkeepers in Lhasa in March 2008, and the state's response. Chinese security forces brutally put down peaceful March 10, 2008 protests in Lhasa by monks from Sera and Drepung Monasteries, sparking days of tense but non-violent follow-on protests that expanded to include lay Tibetans and monks from other monasteries.[8] When the confrontations between Tibetans and the security forces burst into violence on March 14, Tibetan rioters targeted not only official premises and vehicles, but also the Chinese (including Muslim Hui)-owned businesses in the Tibetan quarter and adjacent areas that they saw as part of the machinery of oppression and assimilation in the Tibetan capital. Security forces ultimately moved in with overwhelming force to stop the riots, firing at unarmed Tibetans, killing dozens, and arresting hundreds.

This cycle of violence escalated quickly and broke down starkly along ethnic lines, as did reactions to it. State-run media exacerbated these community cleavages with heavy coverage of the 'burning, smashing and looting' by Tibetans but no mention of the events prior to the riot or the response afterwards. Anti-Tibetan propaganda in the wake of the March 14 riot—including ominous calls for a 'people's war' in Tibet[9]—undoubtedly contributed to an environment that saw the use of excessive force against subsequent Tibetan protesters, the implementation of formal and informal discriminatory measures against Tibetans, and a further alienation of the Tibetan and Chinese people from one another. This phenomenon was also present in a December 2011 attack on Tibetan students in Chengdu by Chinese students, which reportedly resulted in the destruction of the Tibetans' dormitory and Tibetan students beaten so badly they were sent to the hospital.[10]

**Unjust discriminatory legislation and related measures.** While some scholars and policy makers have promoted positive discriminatory legislation as having a palliative effect in divided societies, discrimination that is embodied in law, policy and dominant group practices can also serve to marginalize and isolate groups. This has certainly been the case in Tibet. It starts from a historic narrative on the part of the Chinese party-state of Tibetans as 'backwards' people who need the assistance of their more advanced Chinese neighbors in order to modernize.[11] This discrimination carries forward in 'positive discrimination' measures: not only those meant to assist individual Tibetans, such as preferences for educational admissions and exceptions to family planning regulations, but also the province-to-province budgetary assistance that other Chinese provinces and municipalities are forced to contribute to Tibetan areas. These policies have contributed to the ongoing narrative of Tibetans as incapable of improving their lot of their own volition, and have engendered bitterness at what is perceived to an ungrateful attitude of Tibetans toward Chinese largesse—particularly when Tibetans protest against Chinese rule. After the 2008 protests, there were also ad hoc discriminatory practices where hotel owners refused to let rooms to Tibetans; Tibetans were unable to get a passport for travel; and Tibetans faced problems in accessing public and private transport.[12] Some of these practices continue to the present.

Likewise, in most societies, state targeting of 'battle-age' males of a historically marginalized ethnic group would be seen as an early-warning signal for genocide.[13] The fact that so many of Tibet's 'battle-age' male cohort are to be found in its monasteries—and that Tibet's monasteries have historically been centers of agitation against Chinese Communist rule—adds a particular dimension to concerns about the treatment of Tibetan monks.

**Hate propaganda.** The use of mass media, as well as more diffuse strategies such as rumor and gossip, to mobilize hatred and the dehumanization of a target group is a key indicator in a pre-genocidal environment. Hate speech is used to define and dehumanize target groups, as has been seen most recently in the official Chinese media commenting on the self-immolations. A controlled media environment, where the narrative is set from above, is the most potentially dangerous, due to the absence of countervailing arguments or voices that can help mitigate extreme speech. The average Chinese person has little contact with Tibetans. For most Chinese, the primary source of information about Tibet is the state-run media, due to severe restrictions on access to external information on Tibet across all media forums and the stifling of Tibetan voices within China.

While Chinese state-owned media arguably has become more plural in recent years, on the subject of Tibet the dominant narratives are fixed. They run in a limited range from soft chauvinist Orientalism to virulent nationalist screeds. They include not only labeling the Dalai Lama as a "wolf in monks robes" who travels the world disparaging China, but also accusations that anyone who disagrees with China's policies in Tibet is trying to "split" China. Tibetan voices, even those writing in Chinese, are extremely limited in their ability to penetrate beyond the urban intelligentsia. The brave Chinese dissidents willing to take on the state's dominant narrative on Tibet have themselves become targets of the security structure, including: lawyers who have faced loss of their legal licenses for trying to provide legal representation to Tibetan defendants, and a prominent lawyers organization that was shut down after it called for a reappraisal of Chinese policy in Tibet after the March 2008 protests.

**Economic upheaval.** Scholars have noted that perhaps no factor is more influential in genocidal outbreaks than economic upheaval. This factor is likely to be particularly influential in cases where illiberal governing authorities rely on delivery of economic goods as a key source of their political legitimacy and bureaucratic capacity, as is the case in China. Such crises can also exacerbate or precipitate rebellious, secessionist tendencies among oppressed groups, which then further fuel the paranoia inherent in authoritarian political systems. While the PRC is presently understood to be enjoying robust economic growth, this growth is considered by many economists to be unstable and unsustainable.[14] At the same time, economic growth in Tibetan areas is typically at least as unbalanced as in the rest of China, with the additional aspects of Chinese domination of the Tibetan economy and an ongoing effort to shift Tibetans away from traditional livelihoods through which they were self-reliant. At a national level, the Chinese regime is heavily dependent on continued economic growth as a key pillar of its political legitimacy, since it lacks popular electoral sources.

**Additional risk factors:** The noted genocide scholar Leo Kuper observed that there are two particular internal divisions, both of which are present in the Tibetan context, that have historically been among the most powerful triggers of genocidal behavior: differences of religion between the aggressors and victim that serve to alienate and dehumanize the victims; and struggles for greater autonomy, or denial of the right to self-determination.[15] These two issues are central to the way the cultural genocide in Tibet is manifested, and are the issues on which the Chinese party-state often employs its most heated rhetoric. As this report makes clear, the Chinese party-state has zeroed in on religion as the key to their control over Tibetans and Tibet. At various times, they have tried to rip Tibetan Buddhism out by the roots, with devastating but ultimately incomplete results. In its first report in 1959, the International Commission of Jurists found sufficient evidence that China was engaged in perpetrating acts of genocide against Tibetans *as a religious group*, to warrant a more thorough investigation. In 1960 the ICJ published a second report that found there was *prima facie* evidence that "acts of genocide had been committed in Tibet in an attempt to destroy

the Tibetans *as a religious group*, and that such acts are the acts of genocide, independently of any conventional obligation."[16] The ICJ cited four key evidentiary findings in support of their contention of religious-based genocide in Tibet at that time: (1) Chinese refusal to permit adherence to or practice of Buddhism in Tibet; (2) Systematic Chinese efforts to eradicate religious belief in Tibet; (3) Killing of religious figures; and (4) Forcible transfer of large numbers of Tibetan children out of their homeland in order to prevent them from acquiring a religious upbringing.

Today, the Chinese state permits only a superficial adherence to Tibetan Buddhism and remains committed to its eradication through a combination of incentives and coercion. Its near-term goal, through control of and re-education in the monasteries is to ensure that "[T]he practice of Tibetan Buddhism must be harmonized with the objectives of building modern Socialism in our country… The adaptation of Tibetan Buddhism to Socialist society is a matter of Tibetan Buddhism being conducive to and adapting to the development of Socialist society, rather than Socialist society adapting to Tibetan Buddhism…there is no question of any mutual support on equal terms."[17] Religious figures continue to be subject to a range of sanctions for stepping outside of the permitted range of religious activities, including imprisonment, torture and disappearance, as documented throughout this report.

While they are not being killed in the same numbers as during the early decades of Chinese rule, religious leaders are still being effectively silenced and disempowered by the authorities. The emphasis on eliminating religious instruction among children has shifted over time; the earlier methods of forcibly removing children from their homes have been replaced by incentives and regulatory measures that encourage children toward a Chinese-style education, while punishing them and their parents if children are found to be participating in religious activities. The consistency of the Chinese state's attitude toward Tibetan Buddhism is demonstrated in the shocking 2008 images from Ngaba of monks wearing signboards, being paraded through town in an effort to humiliate revered religious figures and intimidate the Tibetan public. Tibetans' long-term exposure to a ruling authority that has consistently disparaged and tried to eradicate their most cherished beliefs has understandably bred a sense of mistrust of and alienation from not only the Chinese authorities, but also Chinese society.

At the same time, the highly contentious issue of Chinese-defined autonomy versus Tibetan self-determination (i.e. 'splittism') serves as a meta-narrative for Chinese cultural repression. The failure of the Chinese party-state's conception of autonomy to adequately address Tibetans' desire for self-determination, particularly as it relates to control over their own cultural destiny, is at the crux of this conflict. The present mix of cooptation and coercion the authorities are using in Tibet is subtler than aerial bombardment of monasteries, but it is rooted in the same fundamental disdain for Tibetans' religious beliefs and cultural preferences that animated the Cultural Revolution. The entire system of autonomy is predicated on a belief that the Chinese party-state is better positioned to determine what aspects of Tibetan culture are suitable to retain as part of its modernization process in Tibet. Tibetans have chafed against this system from the beginning and continue to be frustrated by its constraints on their economic, political and cultural rights. As China has deepened its direct economic and political engagement in Tibet over time, the chasm between its conception of autonomy and the aspirations of the Tibetan people has only widened. It is no surprise that the monks who have self-immolated over the past year have used their dying breaths to call for both the return of the Dalai Lama and freedom for Tibetans, and that the ultimate crime that Tibetans are charged with when they express their desire for greater freedoms is 'splitting the nation.'

It is precisely, and justifiably, in this context that the Dalai Lama has invoked the term 'cultural genocide' in describing the situation in Tibet. The fact that China's relentless assault on Tibetan culture has failed to wipe it out entirely or turn it into a commoditized museum culture is primarily due to the tenacity and cultural resilience of the Tibetan people. They have fought against and worked around Chinese efforts to control Tibetan culture, and remain the true authors of its authentic future despite their tenuous position. While the dynamic of repression and resistance has

created and exacerbated tensions between the Tibetan and Chinese peoples, this is not the pre-determined outcome for these two societies. There is a different, mutually beneficial path that is possible for both the Chinese and Tibetan peoples, but it will require a fundamental re-evaluation of China's present approach in Tibet. This re-evaluation must start with seeing Tibetans' demands for cultural self-determination, including as it relates to Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama, not as something to be drummed out of them, but rather as critical elements of the way forward.

## Responding to the Real Danger of Cultural Genocide in Tibet

While the Chinese state ultimately bears responsibility for the extreme cultural destruction it is perpetrating in Tibet, the international community has a role to play in addressing this situation and trying to move it onto a different trajectory. Both historical experience and China's emergence as a presumptive great power argue that China's cultural attack in Tibet has global implications. This is clear from the Chinese party-state's use of an increasingly diverse and sophisticated array of propaganda, legalistic, diplomatic and economic tools to respond to and, increasingly, pre-empt international criticisms of its policies and practices in Tibet. Yet criticisms, and international interest in Tibet, persist and remain a serious challenge to China's aspirations on the world stage. The international community's interests in the situation in Tibet cut across a variety of issues, including but not limited to: ensuring respect for international norms and legal standards, including prevention of genocide and the protection of threatened minorities; developing Chinese buy-in to internationally-developed best practices across various fields of human endeavor; and managing the various international diplomatic, economic, social and environmental challenges created by China's aspirations of great power status.

Tibetans have been subject to consistent discriminatory practices under Chinese rule on the basis of their ethnicity, religion and political beliefs, and have been relentlessly targeted for both official punishment and societal ostracism based on expressions of those beliefs. The party-state has engaged in a continual policy and propaganda effort that characterizes Tibetan culture as backward and something to be remediated through a state-directed modernization process. Chinese policies and the results of implementation of these policies show a consistent disregard for Tibetans' human and cultural rights. These are not merely individual violations; rather, the Chinese state has clearly targeted Tibetans *as a group*.

Acts of conventional genocide were committed against the Tibetans in the late 1950s and early 1960s, as the ICJ found at the time. Since then, the level of cultural repression has varied, but even in the best of times, has included very serious forms of repression and destruction. Taken as a whole, over the full period since the Chinese invasion over 62 years ago, and certainly since 1959, the Chinese policies and actions in Tibet have consistently aimed at the destruction of Tibetan culture, religion and identity of the people in the interest of their assimilation into the Chinese-dominated state, with devastating results. In recent years, especially since 2008, the repression has increased so significantly, that, taken together with the destruction that took place before that, it contains elements of cultural genocide.

China's intensifying repression of Tibetan culture comes at a time that the Chinese state is attempting to expand its own cultural power. China's policies and practices in the service of controlling Tibetan culture are wrapped in the language of science and economic development, yet ironically are often contrary to internationally accepted standards and best practices identified by experts in the areas of cultural preservation, poverty alleviation, treatment of minorities and environmental protection. This misuse of culture in pursuit of the Chinese Communist Party's political goals, and in contravention of best practices, has implications beyond Tibet. From Australia to Zambia, China's cultural influence is increasingly present, and not always welcome. Concerns about the intentions behind China's cultural outreach arise in good measure from unease about China's authoritarian policies on internal cultural issues.

The ongoing controversy over Chinese involvement in the development of the Buddha's birthplace in Lumbini, Nepal, is both a worrying example of China's growing influence over Nepal, which is home to approximately 20,000 Tibetan refugees as well as a substantial indigenous population ethnically related to Tibetans, and a clear example of the party-state's appropriation of another country's cultural patrimony for its own, Tibet-related political purposes. Chinese sources have offered upwards of $3 billion toward the development of Lumbini into the world's premier Buddhist pilgrimage site and cultural center. Xiao Wunan, the Chinese Communist Party member overseeing the project, has claimed that the goal was to bring together the three main branches of Buddhism: Mahayana, Theravada and Tibetan Buddhism; yet an *Al Jazeera* report on the project noted that no one involved with it had spoken to the Dalai Lama, and suggested that part of China's intention in backing it was to undermine his role as a global Buddhist leader.[18]

Likewise, China's relentless propaganda efforts about Tibet and Tibetan culture now extend far beyond the familiar litany of benefits that Tibetans have received since the founding of the People's Republic. The Chinese government now sponsors a range of media efforts, exhibits and conferences on Tibet to get its message out around the world, while simultaneously limiting access to Tibet by independent scholars, journalists and diplomats, and otherwise attempting to undermine and severely punish Tibetans who attempt to get information about the situation in Tibet to a broader audience. This propaganda war extends to both crude rhetorical attacks on the Dalai Lama and intense pressure on (including attempts at punishment of) governments over meetings with him or permission for him to travel to their countries, even for religious activities. Such activities are an infringement on the sovereignty of these states, and serve to further isolate the Tibetan people who already struggle to make their voices heard through the veil of Chinese distortion. As China seeks to expand its influence, including through the exportation of a state-led cultural outreach initiative, the underlying attitudes of the Chinese party-state toward other cultures are increasingly relevant beyond China's borders.

Beyond the specific concerns around preservation of Tibet's unique culture, the nature of China's attacks on this culture raise serious concerns for those working to prevent mass atrocities. Experts in the field have identified elements of cultural genocide as pre-cursors to physical, conventional genocide, and policy-makers are increasingly recognizing the links between cultural destruction and physical destruction of a people. For those in the genocide prevention and elimination field, China's attack on culture in Tibet should hold substantial interest as an important test case for early warning systems that attempt to address genocidal or pre-genocidal behavior.

In the years since the adoption of the Genocide Convention, the murderous rampages of authoritarian regimes have provided some of the strongest arguments for expanding the definition of genocide to include groups targeted for their political beliefs or status. The scale of mass killing that characterized the early years of the People's Republic of China would undoubtedly meet the requirements of the conventional definition of genocide save one: its political nature. Scholars who support inclusion of political groups within the scope of genocide routinely cite the extreme violence of the Cultural Revolution and the man-made famine of the Great Leap Forward as compelling evidence in support of their contention. But even those scholars and investigators who reject political group genocide find that the particular targeting of ethnic groups by the Chinese Communist regime—including the treatment of the Tibetans—may have qualified as genocidal.[19]

The evidence of previous genocidal behavior by the Chinese state, and the presence of other indicators of a pre-genocidal environment, should be sufficient to place Tibet on the watch-list of those who monitor emergent crises. The Chinese authorities clearly have failed in their responsibility to protect the Tibetan people, and instead have acted in a predatory and antagonistic fashion. The ongoing self-immolations by Tibetans in Tibet, the hate propaganda and militarized responses to them, are particularly strong indicators that this community is in crisis and that the situation risks a rapid degradation. The Chinese government's virtual monopoly on information about what is happening in Tibet at the moment makes moni-

toring the situation there extremely difficult, but those who are attempting to institutionalize the Responsibility to Protect (R2P, see page 18) should be at the vanguard of efforts seeking greater openness and accountability about the present situation. Bringing the elements of cultural genocide in Tibet into the broader discourse around R2P and the prevention of atrocities can itself serve as an additional fulcrum for expanding the level of knowledge and understanding about what is happening in what appears to be a highly conflicted environment.

## The Spanish Court and Universal Jurisdiction

A pair of ongoing cases in the Spanish courts has served to highlight the relevance of Tibet to the global discourse on genocide and accountability. These two lawsuits alleging Chinese authorities have perpetrated crimes against humanity in Tibet were filed in Spain under the principle of 'universal jurisdiction.' The lawyers who brought them have been able to keep the cases alive, despite tremendous pressure from the Chinese government to shut them down.

Spain has become a focal point for the assertion of an individual state's universal jurisdiction to hear cases of crimes against humanity, including genocide, since a 1985 amendment to the Spanish Criminal Law explicitly permitted its courts to pursue criminal cases where the criminal act occurred outside Spain, even if there was no 'local nexus' with Spain as had previously been required.[20] The first major test of this assertion of universal jurisdiction arose when a group of progressive Spanish lawyers filed a lawsuit against Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, and Judge Baltasar Garzon served an international arrest warrant against him in 1988. While Pinochet was never successfully prosecuted in Spain, commentators have noted that the application of universal jurisdiction to his case paved the way for Pinochet's eventual indictment in Chile as well as a more expansive reading of states' responsibility to prosecute crimes against humanity.[21]

The two Tibet lawsuits in the Spanish court were filed by José Elias Esteve Moltó, a Professor of International Law at the University of Valencia, and Alan Cantos of the Spanish Tibet Support Committee (CAT). Esteve Moltó and Cantos wanted to explore the mechanisms for holding the Chinese leadership accountable and seeking justice for the Tibetan people that exist through international law.[22] The first case, which was accepted by the Spanish high court (*Audencia Nacional*) in 2005, charged Jiang Zemin and six other Chinese leaders with genocide and crimes against humanity in Tibet.[23] The second case was filed in 2008, and charged current Chinese leaders with crimes against humanity, including "a generalized and systematic attack against the Tibetan population… since March 2008."[24] The second case was thrown out in 2010 following amendments reinstating the requirement of a nexus with Spain for prosecution in Spanish courts. CAT's appeal of this decision is pending.

The Chinese government has denounced both cases as inappropriate judicial action. In 2009, the Chinese government sent the Spanish authorities a letter rejecting a judicial request for Chinese officials to testify in court in Madrid and demanded that the Spanish government block further investigation by the Audencia Nacional into crimes against the Tibetan people, calling it a "false lawsuit." The letter was the first written response from the Chinese authorities since the two Tibet lawsuits were filed.[25]

[1] Even though China has not ratified the ICCPR, it is obligated under Article 18 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties not to 'defeat the object and purpose' of the treaty, and Beijing claims to be putting in place the necessary legal and regulatory provisions to allow its full accession to the convention. United Nations, Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (done at Vienna on 23 May 1969; entered into force on 27 January 1980), *United Nations Treaty Series*, vol. 1155, p. 331.

[2] For an extensive discussion of the conflict between China's treatment of Tibetan nomads and the ICESCR and other relevant provisions of international law, see Human Rights Watch, *No One Has the Liberty to Refuse*, at pp. 22–25.

[3] See, e.g., UNPO, "UN Committee Fears Alteration of Demographics in 'Minority Areas' of China," September 1, 2009, available at: *http://www.UNPO.org/article/9994*; ICT, "UN Child Rights Body Increases Pressure on China to allow Independent Access to Panchen Lama," September 30, 2005, available at: *http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/un-child-rights-body-increases-pressure-china-allow-independent-access*; UN News Service, "Wave of enforced disappearances in China sparks concern from UN rights experts," April 8, 2011, available at: *http://www. un.org/apps/news/printnewsAr.asp?nid=38058*; and ICT, "UN Special Rapporteur warns of consequences to nomad settlement," December 22, 2010, available at: *http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/un-special-rapporteur-warns-consequences-nomad-settlement.*

[4] ICT, "Tibetan Language: UN Human Rights Experts' Urgent Intervention with China," May 25, 2011, available at: *http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/Tibetan-language-UN-human-rights-experts'-urgent-intervention-china%E2%80%A8%E2%80%A8*; and Tibet.Net, "China's Education Record of Tibet Disappoints UN Expert," December 21, 2003, available at: *http://www.tew.org/development/education.un.html.*

[5] The International Commission of Jurists found in 1960 that "acts of genocide had been committed in Tibet in an attempt to destroy the Tibetans as a religious group…," International Commission of Jurists, *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic, a Report to the International Commission of Jurists by its Legal Inquiry Committee on Tibet*, (Geneva: International Commission of Jurists, 1960), p. 346. For further discussion of genocide "red flags," see, e.g.: Jones, *Genocide* at p. 569–571; Thomas Cushman, "Is Genocide Preventable? Some Theoretical Considerations," *Journal of Genocide Research*, 5: 4 (2003); Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[6] ICT, "'New Year of Mourning' in Tibet: Police again open fire killing Tibetan," January 25, 2012, available at: *http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/'new-year-mourning'-tibet-police-again-open-fire-killing-tibetan.*

[7] See, e.g., the 1959 and 1960 reports of the International Commission of Jurists on the situation in Tibet; and Jones, *Genocide*, pp. 216–217.

[8] ICT, *Tibet at a Turning Point*, p. 41. All information in this section related to the events around March 10–14, 2008 is drawn from this report, pp. 41–63, unless otherwise noted.

[9] Reuters, "China declares 'people's war' over Tibet," March 16, 2008, available at: *http://www.stuff.co.nz/world/318620/China-declares-peoples-war-over-Tibet.* The original doctrine of 'people's war' as developed by Mao Zedong to describe his strategy for pursuing a long-term armed revolutionary struggle that mobilized grassroots support to bleed an entrenched enemy over time.

[10] China Digital Times, "Han Student Describes Violence Against Tibetans," December 16, 2011, available at: *http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2011/12/han-students-attack-tibetans-at-chengdu-railroad-engineering-school/*.

[11] Emily Yeh, "Tropes of Indolence and the Cultural Politics of Development in Lhasa, Tibet," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol. 97, Issue 3, pp. 593–612 (September 2007).

[12] ICT, "Official Notice Evidence of Discrimination Against Tibetans After Protests," October 8, 2008, available at: *http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/official-notice-evidence-discrimination-against-tibetans-after-protests.*

[13] See the discussion of the murder of military age males in the massacre of Srebrenica in Samantha Power, *"A Problem from Hell:" America in the Age of Genocide* (Basic: 2002), pp. 393–421.

[14] See e.g., Michel Pettis, "Real Estate: Not the Big Over Investment Problem in China," January 25, 2012, available at: *http://econintersect.com/wordpress/?p=18223*; and Patrick Chovanec, "Bloomberg: China's Slowdown," October 19, 2011, available at: *http://chovanac.wordpress.com/2011/10/19/bloomberg-chinas-slowdown.*

[15] Leo Kuper, "Types of Genocide and Mass Murder," in *Toward the Understanding and Prevention of Genocide*, ed. Israel Charny (Westview: 1984); p. 39.

[16] Emphasis added; 1960 ICJ Report, p. 215.

[17] Section 3, Question 36, TAR Patriotic Education Handbook for Monasteries Propaganda Book No. 2 "Handbook for Education in Anti-Splittism," issued by the TAR leading committee for patriotic education in monasteries, May 2002; translated in ICT, *When the Sky Fell to Earth: the New Crackdown on Buddhism in Tibet*, p. 119.

[18] Melissa Chan, "The Lumbini Project: China's $3billion for Buddhism," July 16, 2011, available at: *http://blogs.aljazeera.net/asia/2011/07/16/lumbini-project-chinas-3bn-buddhism*.

[19] See, e.g., the 1959 and 1960 reports of the International Commission of Jurists on the situation in Tibet; and Jones, *Genocide*, pp. 216–217.

[20] Extraterritorial jurisdiction is traditionally applied in national courts in limited circumstances, where the plaintiff can establish a 'nexus' with the court's territorial jurisdiction, i.e. the victim or perpetrator is a citizen of the country where the case is filed, some element of the crime took place in or had an intimate connection to the relevant country, etc.

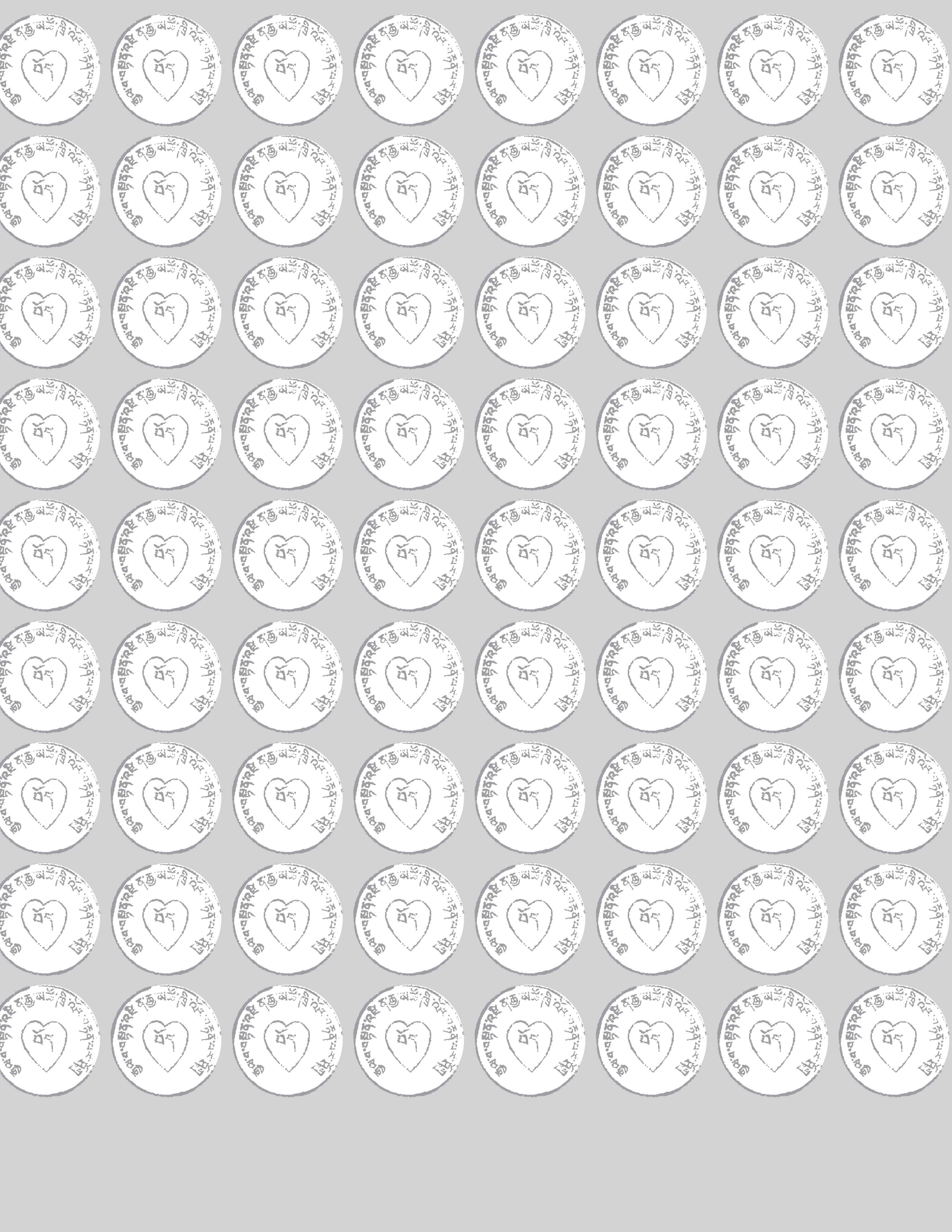
[21] See, e.g., Stacie Jonas, "The Ripple Effect of the Pinochet Case," *Human Rights Brief*, Vol. 11 Issue 3, pp. 36–38 (May 24, 2004).

[22] For analysis of their work and universal jurisdiction as applied to Tibet, see Karen Collier, "*Justice Without Borders:*" *The Viability of Universal Jurisdiction the Spanish National Court's Historic Lawsuits for Tibet*, available at: *http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/tibet-news/justice-without-borders-viability-universal-jurisdiction-spanish-national-court%C2%B4s-historic-lawsu*.

[23] Lisa Abend & Geoff Pingree, "Spanish court looks at Tibetan genocide claims," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 2, 2006, available at: *http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0302/p04s01-woap.html*.

[24] Collier, "Justice without Borders," p. 14.

[25] See ICT report, "China Threatens Spain over Tibet Lawsuits," August 20, 2009, available at: *http://www.savetibet.org/media-center/ict-news-reports/china-threatens-spain-over-tibet-lawsuits-judge-announces-extension-cases-cover-nangpa-sho*, and related material on the ICT website for additional information about these cases.

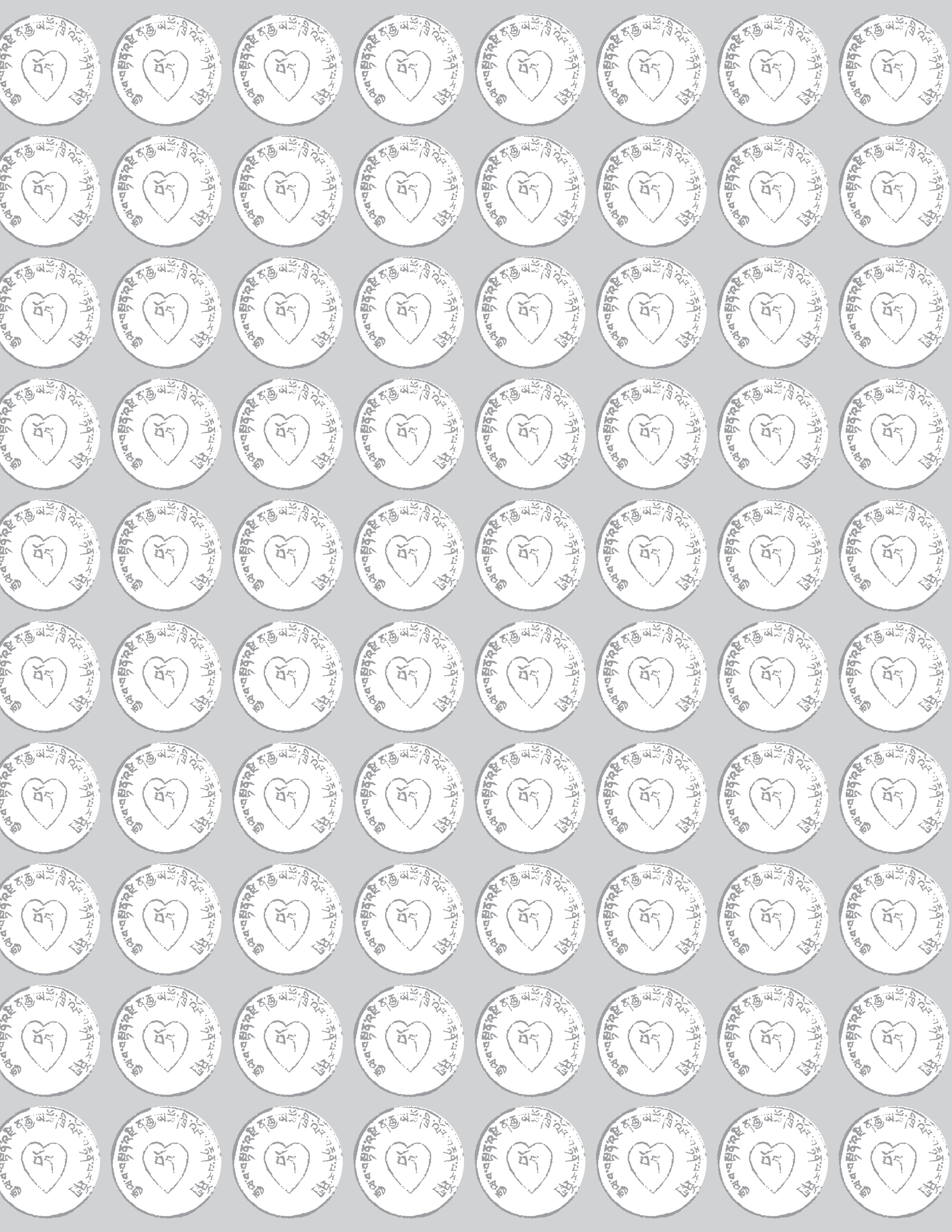


# CONCLUSION

Throughout more than six decades of Chinese Communist rule in Tibet, an undeniable pattern has emerged of repression, relative liberalization, vigorous reassertion of cultural identity by Tibetans, and renewed repression. Over time, each new cycle of repression has built on the structural bases of the previous cycle, so that the intervening periods of liberalization have become less significant, while the pressure on Tibetan culture and identity continues to escalate. This pattern of repression of Tibetan culture is rooted in the consistent application of policies that privilege the Chinese party-state's interests over those of the Tibetan people. These policies are, in turn, based on a set of ideological and nationalistic principles that permeate the thinking of Chinese leaders and have taken hold on a societal level.

Given the role that China is now playing and aspires to play in the world, these aspects of the Chinese Communist Party's character have serious implications beyond the Tibetan context. Moreover, in view of the murderous tendencies that the CCP has displayed throughout its history, policies in Tibet that are driven by assimilationist imperatives and characterized by dehumanization of Tibetans are of global concern for those who wish to prevent mass atrocities before they happen. Based on the evidence presented in the earlier sections of this report, it is evident that Chinese policies and practices in Tibet have fallen dramatically short of the People's Republic of China's international and domestic obligations as the self-declared sovereign of the Tibetan people. The Chinese state has not only failed in its responsibility to protect the Tibetan people and their rights under Chinese and international law, it has been the primary violator of those rights.

The presence of elements of cultural genocide in Tibet is most urgently about the fate of the Tibetan people, but it is also a matter of global concern. The potential loss that this cultural destruction represents for humanity is significant and irreversible once it occurs. The international community must recognize the fact that this destruction is happening at the hands of a nation that seeks to become a great power with aspirations to shape global norms and institutions. Finally, there is growing evidence that such situations of cultural genocide represent a significant marker on the continuum toward mass atrocities, providing an important opportunity for prevention. The Tibetan people, from their highly vulnerable position under Chinese rule, have consistently taken every opportunity to assert their rights as the authentic arbiters of their own culture and to reject Chinese cultural hegemony in Tibet. Throughout Chinese Communist rule, the party-state has jailed, beaten, tortured and killed Tibetans with impunity for simple acts of standing up for their cultural identity. Today, Tibetans continue to stand up to the vast and growing power of the Chinese state, and struggle through religious practice, song, literature, protest and even self-immolation to express their desire to define for themselves what it means to be Tibetan. They continue to pay the price for standing up to the Chinese state, facing imprisonment, torture, deprivation and worse; yet they persevere. For those who have less to lose in speaking out on behalf of Tibetans, the deteriorating situation in Tibet and the bravery of Tibetans who continue to resist must serve as a call to action.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## For the Government of the People's Republic of China:

A fundamentally new approach is warranted in Tibet. There are both overarching recommendations of actions that the Chinese government can take to address their failed policies, as well as more immediate steps to alleviate tensions across the Tibetan plateau and ensure the protection of Tibetan culture. To address the core issues of cultural destruction in Tibet, ICT recommends that Chinese authorities should:

- After engaging in immediate confidence building measures to address the current emergency in Tibetan areas, work with the designated representatives of the Dalai Lama to establish a broader and more substantive dialogue regarding the most serious current threats to Tibetan culture, including Chinese policies on religious practice and expression, education and language, in-migration by non-Tibetans, and economic development.
- Conduct an independent assessment of existing policies, legislation and regulations that negatively impact Tibetan culture, utilizing international expertise and incorporating Tibetan participation. This review should focus on both social and economic policy, as well as the various provisions of law and policy on administration of national autonomy, grasslands management, education, and the environment.
- Establish a tripartite mechanism that includes Tibetan representatives, Chinese representatives, and appropriate international experts, including representatives of international (U.N.) agencies, to form working groups on best practices for: culturally and environmentally appropriate economic development; cultural preservation; environmental preservation; bilingual and minority education; and autonomous self-government. Make the findings of this effort public, and work to adopt policies reflecting the recommendations of these working groups.
- Reassess current security policies in response to unrest or protest in Tibetan areas, and where possible permanently draw down the security presence in Tibetan areas.
- Eliminate the practice of placing police and Party cadres in monasteries and other religious institutions, and permit self-management of these institutions by appropriate religious authorities under regulations that are consistent with international standards for protection of freedom of religion.
- Work with appropriate international institutions, such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and the UN Development Program, to conduct independent, transparent environmental, human development and human rights impact assessments that meet international standards for current and planned infrastructure and major industrial projects in Tibetan areas. Make the findings public, and involve Tibetan communities in all phases of the review and remediation processes.[1]
- Work with Tibetan communities and appropriate international bodies to develop a culturally appropriate strategic plan for implementation in Tibet of the current PRC-wide campaign to strengthen culture and expand cultural production.

As immediate targeted steps to alleviate tensions in Tibetan areas, the Chinese authorities should:

- Withdraw police and other security forces from all monasteries and nunneries; suspend plans to permanently house party cadres in monasteries and all ongoing patriotic education campaigns; and initiate local dialogues with Tibetan community and religious leaders on issues related to security, access to monasteries and the appropriate level of official intervention in religious matters.
- In Lhasa and other municipalities, scale back the present, heavily militarized security presence in favor of a more community-oriented approach that respects the basic rights of Tibetans.
- Stop rhetorical attacks and other propaganda efforts directed against the Dalai Lama; accept the Dalai Lama's offer to engage in dialogue regarding the crisis of self-

immolations in Tibet; and provide opportunities for affected communities in Tibet to hear the Dalai Lama's appeal for peace and an end to the self-immolations.

- Open access to all Tibetan areas for journalists, diplomats —including special mechanisms of the U.N.—and other investigative entities that can document the current situation and assist in developing longer-term recommendations for diffusing tension, and commit to permanently reopening Tibet to foreign journalists.

- Undertake an urgent review of the cases of individuals who have been arrested in all Tibetan areas on state security charges since March 2008. Any cases where due process violations are present should be subjected to further review and rehearing as needed. Allegations of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment should be fully investigated and, if warranted, prosecuted.

- End formal or informal administrative and political barriers for Tibetans to receive travel documents, including both restrictions on internal travel for monks and current practices related to withholding or delaying the issuance of passports to Tibetans.

- Announce the suspension of State Administration for Religious Affairs' "State Order Number 5: Management Measures for the Reincarnation of Living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism," which codifies the Chinese party-state's inappropriate assertion of control over the process of recognition of reincarnate lamas; and announce a moratorium on the promulgation of new legal and policy measures that repress Tibetan Buddhists' right to freedom of religious expression.

- Suspend major infrastructure projects in Tibetan areas and impose a moratorium on settlement of Tibetan nomads displaced by development or environmental protection initiatives, pending an independent assessment, including legal review, of policies that require or produce displacement or resettlement, loss of property rights or forced slaughter of livestock.

- Suspend any initiative that reduces or eliminates Tibetan language instruction in schools in Tibetan areas.

- End the targeted censorship of Tibetan writers, performers and other cultural actors, whether in print or electronic media, particularly the targeting of Tibetan vernacular cultural expression.

- Suspend any construction or development project that would result in the destruction or damage of Tibetan historic sites, including but not limited to monasteries, stupas, mani walls, and well-preserved examples of classic Tibetan architecture. Ensure that any new construction in Tibetan areas is undertaken with genuine input from Tibetans on the architectural motifs and construction techniques that are appropriate to the area.

- Enforce household registration requirements that prevent non-Tibetans from changing their household registration to Tibetan autonomous areas. Suspend all programs and projects that include an element of recruitment or relocation of non-Tibetans to Tibetan autonomous areas pending further review for necessity and appropriateness of the proposed in-migration.

## For Other Governments and the International Community:

The Dalai Lama has often noted that the loss of Tibetan culture is not only a loss for the Tibetan people but also a loss for the whole world. Part of encouraging a different approach in Tibet is the international community's continued insistence that the present approach is not only misguided but remains a fundamental barrier to China's global leadership aspirations. As such, the International Campaign for Tibet makes the following recommendations on how the international community and individual states can address the elements of cultural genocide in Tibet:

- Concerned governments should take immediate joint action to persuade the government of the People's Republic of China of the need to cease those policies and practices which are heightening inter-communal tensions in Tibet.
- Concerned governments should recognize that the situation in Tibet constitutes an ongoing pattern of gross and systematic violations of human rights targeting the Tibetan culture, religion and identity in ways that both reveal elements of cultural genocide and present risk factors for conventional genocide if not adequately addressed. Governments should use this language in general comments as well as in their interventions with Chinese officials.
- Individual governments should coordinate their efforts with other like-minded countries and support each other in explicitly calling on the Chinese government to address those policies toward Tibetan areas that are the root cause of ongoing tensions, and that threaten the unique culture, religion and identity of the Tibetan people. Specific reference to and emphasis on Chinese policies that harm Tibetan culture, religion and identity should be included routinely in governments' statements on the situation in Tibet, in both bilateral and multilateral contexts.
- Particularly, the United States' Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues should work with the U.S. government's new interagency Atrocities Prevention Board to ensure that the situation in Tibet is on their watch-list. The Special Coordinator's office should serve as the focal point for collecting information and monitoring the situation in Tibet, as well as for U.S. diplomatic efforts to get like-minded countries to engage in coordinated action on this issue.
- The major donor governments, including the European Commission, should maintain and, where possible, expand targeted programmatic assistance for Tibetans, including: support for Tibetan-language media; support for sustainable, culturally appropriate development assistance to Tibetan communities; educational and cultural exchange and development programs targeted to Tibetans, both in Tibet and in exile; support to stabilize the Tibetan refugee community, particularly in Nepal; and regular dialogue with authentic Tibetan representatives, including but not limited to the elected Kalon Tripa of the Central Tibetan Administration and the Dalai Lama and his representatives. Donors should establish legally binding project principles to govern official development assistance carried out in Tibetan areas.[2]
- Individual bilateral partners should take steps to include Tibetans in their general educational, cultural and development activities in China. This could include, for example: expanded opportunities for Tibetan scholars, artists, writers and performers to participate in cultural exchange and scholarship activities; a targeted level of Tibetan participation in relevant meetings, exchanges and delegations; and inclusion of Tibetan perspectives in bilateral dialogues with China on human rights, the rule of law, the environment, health care, education and other issues relevant to the situation in Tibet.
- Concerned countries should specifically task their embassies and consulates to expand their outreach to Tibetan communities and monitoring of the situation in Tibet, including by maintaining a specific action officer on Tibet in the embassy's political section. Specifically, the United States should vigorously pursue its long-stated goal of establishing a consulate in Lhasa. Drawing on the U.S. initiative, the EU and others should begin negotiations with China on establishing consulates in Lhasa.

- Diplomats, including representatives of multilateral organizations, and journalists should continue seeking access to all Tibetan areas until it is granted, based on the principle of reciprocity by which Chinese diplomats and journalists presently enjoy relatively open access and unrestricted travel in the countries where they are posted.

- The various thematic agencies and organs of the United Nations—including the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Development Program (UNDP), the UN Environmental Program (UNEP), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), treaty bodies for various human rights instruments, and the UN Human Rights Council and its special mechanisms—should undertake specific initiatives to address the relevant aspects of cultural repression within their mandates.

- The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) should add a new Tibet pillar to its current China-DAC Study Group to discuss with Chinese counterparts the application in Tibetan contexts of: best practices in the area of community based and participatory models of development for minorities—including issues such as minority education, language policies and cultural preservation; and international best practices in the areas of environmental preservation and restoration, grasslands management and eco-tourism.

- Foreign private investors in Tibet should make a specific effort to adopt global best practices, looking beyond the technical requirements of local laws to comply with emerging global values and expectations of socially responsible investor behavior. Investors should refer to the guidelines on economic development activities in Tibet developed by the Central Tibetan Administration (copies available upon request by contacting *ecodesk@gov.tibet.net*).

[1] In addition to these general recommendations, ICT also refers policymakers to specific recommendations dealing with Tibetan livelihoods and resettlement in ICT's report, *Tracking the Steel Dragon*, pp. 251–254 (2008).

[2] See, e.g., the project principles for Tibetan areas articulated in the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, Section 616, Public Law 107–228 (signed into law September 30, 2002), available at: *www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW.../pdf/PLAW-107publ228.pdf.*

## 60 Years of Chinese Misrule
## Arguing Cultural Genocide in Tibet

A report by the International Campaign for Tibet




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